116th LGAQ Annual Conference
PROCEEDINGS

“Making a Difference – Growing Queensland’s Four Pillar Economy”

This conference is offset by green energy

22 - 25 October 2012
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre on Grey
Grey Street, South Bank, Brisbane
Monday, 22 October 2012

8.30am - 1.00pm  Policy Executive Meeting

1.00pm - 6.00pm  Registration
Delegates, observers and partners
Plaza Ballroom, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre (BCEC)
on Grey Street, South Bank, Brisbane

1.00pm - 1.30pm  Policy Executive Lunch with LGMA (Qld) Board of Management

1.00pm – 4.00pm  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders’ forum

1.15pm – 1.45pm  IPAD training

2.00pm – 4.00pm  Urban and rural council forums

4.00pm – 4.30pm  Annual Conference briefing
(for first time conference attendees)

4.00pm – 4.30pm  Trade and sponsor briefing

4.30pm – 5.00pm  IPAD training

5.30pm – 7.00pm  Welcoming ceremony
Trade Exhibition Area, Plaza Ballroom
Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

Hosted by King & Company

5.30pm  Welcome to Country
Uncle Des Sandy, Traditional Elder

5.35pm  Welcome to Brisbane
Cr Adrian Schrinner
Acting Lord Mayor, Brisbane City Council

5.45pm  Response
Cr Paul Bell AM
President, LGAQ

5.50pm  Sponsors Address
Mr Tim Fynes Clinton
Managing Partner, King & Company

7.00pm  Welcoming Ceremony Concludes
Tuesday, 23 October 2012
Member Council Day

7.45AM
REGISTRATION
Delegates, observers and partners
Plaza Ballroom, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre (BCEC)
on Grey Street, South Bank, Brisbane

8.15AM
CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT

8.16am
Security briefing
Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre Staff

8.18am
Presentation of Policy Executive

8.30am
Official opening
Hon David Crisafulli MP
Minister for Local Government

9.00AM
PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
CR PAUL BELL AM
PRESIDENT
LGAQ

9.30am
Keynote address: “Making a Difference”
Dr Daniel Isenberg
Professor of Management Practice
Babson Global

“Courtesy of Saxtons Speakers Bureau”

10.30AM
MORNING TEA

11.00am
Telstra sponsorship address

11.10am
Doing it smarter – Improving productivity in local government
Greg Hallam PSM
Chief Executive Officer
LGAQ

11.20am
Productivity Panel
Chair: Greg Hallam PSM
Chief Executive Officer
LGAQ
Greg Jensen  
Group Manager, Community and Customer Services  
Redland City Council  

Steve Crowe  
Chief Executive Officer  
Propel Partnerships/ Resolute Information Technology  

Carl Wulff  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ipswich City Council  

Ian Maynard  
Chief Executive  
Public Service Commission  

11.45am  
Three LGAQ Amigos  
Chair: Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services. LGAQ  
Hon Joan Sheldon AM - Ethics Advisor  
Bob Abbot - Mayoral Mentor  
Hayden Wright - Elected Member Advisor  

12.30pm  
Lunch hosted by Powerlink  

1.30pm  
Ergon Energy sponsorship address  
Peter Billing  
Executive General Manager Operations  
Ergon Energy  

1.35pm  
Keynote Speaker: “Stop f……ing around”  
Craig Harper  
Author of book of the same name and Australia’s leading motivational speaker  
“Courtesy of Saxtons Speakers Bureau”  

2.00pm  
Growing the Queensland Four Pillar Economy  
Bill Shields  
Director  
Queensland Treasury Corporation
2.30pm  Local Government Amendment Act discussions
Chair: Greg Hoffman PSM
General Manager, Advocate Stream, LGAQ

Hon David Crisafulli MP
Minister for Local Government

Stephen Johnston
Acting Director-General
Department of Local Government

Tim Fynes-Clinton
Managing Director
King & Company

3.00pm  Presidential candidate speeches

3.15pm  LGM Risk Management Awards

3.30pm – 5.00pm  Council Segment Sessions
  Rural and remote
  Indigenous
  South east Queensland
  Coastal
  Resource Regions

6.30pm for 7.00pm  Gala Dinner (includes presentation of inaugural LGAQ media awards)
Exhibition Hall 2, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

Gala Dinner: Hosted by Hastings Deering
Dress: Coat and tie
Long Service Certificate Presentations

11.30pm  Program concludes
Wednesday, 24 October 2012
Your Council Day

8.00AM  CONFERENCE RESUMES – HOUSEKEEPING

8.05am Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal update
Deputy President Adrian Bloomfield
Chairperson
Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal

8.15am AGM/Motions

8.45am Debate

9.35am State Opposition update
Mr Tim Mulherin MP
Shadow Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Planning and Racing,
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry,
Local Government, Science, IT and Innovation

10.00am Morning tea

10.25am Debate

12.30pm Lunch hosted by Queensland Treasury Corporation

1.15pm Constitutional Recognition of Local Government
Hon Justice James Spigelman AC QC
Chairperson, Australian Broadcasting Corporation

"Courtesy of Saxtons Speakers Bureau"

1.45pm Council Forums continued
Rural and remote councils
Indigenous councils
South east Queensland councils
Coastal councils
Resource Regions councils

3.15pm Healthy Leader awards

3.20pm Debate

5.30pm Conference close
Thursday, 25 October 2012
Your Day

7.00am – 8.30am  Regional Road Group Assembly
8.30am – 9.30am  Breakfast in trade area hosted by Jardine Lloyd Thompson
9.30am – 10.30am Professional development streams
10.30am  Morning tea
11.00am – 12.00pm Professional development streams
12.00pm  Close
LGAQ
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
2012

CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS
MOTIONS SECTION

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

The following decisions of previous Annual Conferences have been observed in compiling the Agenda and shall continue to be the procedure until such time as altered by an Annual Conference.

SESSIONAL ORDER - MOTIONS - CLASSIFICATION

That the motions before the Conference shall be classified into three groups:

‘A’ Those embodying questions of principle not previously determined.

‘B’ Those of importance (but not involving a major issue) not previously determined.

‘C’ Those which are affirmations of earlier decisions.

Motions grouped under ‘A’ shall be given priority over all other motions and be discussed in the order in which they appear in the Agenda Paper.

Motions grouped under ‘B’ shall follow discussions of those under Group ‘A’ and be taken in the order in which they appear in the Agenda Paper.

Motions grouped under ‘C’ shall be adopted under the one motion referring them to the Executive for appropriate action. Subject to the reservation that should any Delegate wish any motion to be taken from Group ‘C’ for general discussion, it shall be open to them to request the Conference so to do, not later than the close of business on the first day of the Conference.

Subjects for discussion

(a) A Member may bring forward for discussion at an Annual Conference any matter connected with the objects or the Association or pertaining to a subject of common concern to Members, upon giving to the Executive Director 6 weeks notice, in writing, of such intention.

(b) However:-

(i) the requirement for such notice may be dispensed with by resolution of the Conference if the matter is one which, in the sole opinion of the President:-

(A) is relevant to all, or substantially all, of the members of the Association; and;

(B) requires an urgent decision in order to protect or advance the interests of members such that it is not possible or practical to refer the matter to the next Executive meeting after the conference to enable the Executive to consider and determine an appropriate response to the matter on behalf of members.
(ii) the Executive, or an Agenda Committee appointed by the Executive under Rule 53, may determine that a matter will not be brought forward if:

(A) the matter has previously been dealt with by a conference and the Executive or Agenda Committee is of the view that there has been no material change in circumstances so as to warrant the matter being brought forward again;

(B) action has already been taken to implement or respond to the matter in accordance with a direction of the Executive or an adopted policy of the Association; and

(C) the matter is outside the proper scope of the objects of the Association.

(iii) the Executive or an Agenda Committee may also amalgamate one or more matters into a single item for consideration by the Conference where those matters relate to the same or substantially the same subject.

(c) The President must rule a matter out of order if the required notice under Rule 25 (a) has not been given and the President is not satisfied as required by Rule 25(b) (i).

(d) A determination by the President under Rule 25(c) that a matter is out of order is a substantive and final decision, and no delegate may move a motion of dissent from that determination or otherwise seek to challenge it at the Conference.

(e) Despite a decision of the Executive or an Agenda Committee under Rule 25(b)(ii), a matter the subject of such a decision may be brought forward if the Conference so decides by resolution.

(f) At any Special Conference no business may be transacted except such as is stated in the notice thereof and other matters incidental or directly relation to that business.”

**SCHEDULE**

(Rules of procedure for debate)

*Motions to be seconded*

1. A motion must not be debated unless it is seconded.

*Motions not to be withdrawn without consent*

2. When a motion has been proposed and seconded, it becomes subject to the control of the Conference, and may not be withdrawn without the consent of the Conference.

*Amendment may be moved*

3. (1) When a motion has been proposed and seconded, any delegate is at liberty to move an amendment thereon.
(2) However, an amendment may not be debated unless it is seconded.

**Only one amendment at a time**

4. A second or subsequent amendment must not be taken into consideration until the previous amendment has been disposed of.

**Further amendment may be moved on amended question**

5. (1) If an amendment has been carried, the question as amended then becomes the question before the General Meeting.

   (2) A further amendment upon such question may be moved.

**How subsequent amendments may be moved**

6. (a) If a motion for amendment, whether upon the original question or upon any question amended as aforesaid, has been lost, then a further amendment may be moved to the question to which such first-mentioned amendment was moved, and so on.

   (b) However, not more than one question and one proposed amendment thereof may be before the General Meeting at any one time.

**Limitation as to the number and duration of speeches**

7. (1) The mover of an original motion has:-

   (a) a right of general reply to all observations which have been made in reference to such motion; and

   (b) the right to speak upon every amendment moved in respect of the motion.

   (2) Subject to Rule 8, every delegate, other than the mover of an original motion, has the right to speak once upon such motion, and once upon every amendment in respect of the motion.

   (3) Except with the consent of the General Meeting, a delegate must not speak more than once upon any one motion except when misunderstood or misrepresented, in which case the delegate is permitted to correct or explain the misunderstanding or misrepresentation without adding any further observations than may be necessary for the purpose of such correction or explanation.

   (4) Except with the consent of the General Meeting:-

   (a) the mover of an original motion, in his or her opening speech, must not speak for more than 5 minutes;

   (b) a speaker must not otherwise speak for more than three minutes at any one time.
Speakers in rotation

8. (1) Despite Rule 7, when a motion or amendment has been moved and seconded, no delegate may speak further in support of the motion until someone has spoken in opposition to the motion, and thereafter speakers are only entitled to speak for or against the motion in rotation.

(2) However, in any case where the same motion has been submitted by more than one Member, a representative from each such Member is entitled to speak.

Digression

9. Every delegate speaking must confine his or her remarks to the matter then under consideration.

Imputations

10. A delegate must not make personal reflections on or imputed improper motives to any other delegate.

Chairperson to decide as to pre-audience

11. If two or more delegates rise to speak at the same time, the chairperson decides which of the delegates may speak first.

Chairperson to maintain order

12. The chairperson must maintain order, and may, without the intervention of any delegate, call any delegate to order whenever, in his or her opinion, the necessity arises for so doing.

Delegates may raise question of order

13. A delegate who considers that any other delegate is out of order may call the attention of the chairperson to that matter. The question of order must be dealt with immediately, without further discussion, in accordance with Rule 14.

Questions of order - how dealt with

14. (1) Upon a question of order being raised, the delegate called to order must immediately resume his seat, unless specially permitted by the chairperson to offer an explanation, retraction, or apology.

(2) If the delegate is so permitted, he or she may explain, retract, or apologise for the matter or remark alleged to have been out of order.

(3) If such explanation, retraction or apology is considered satisfactory by the chairperson, no further discussion on the question of order is permitted.
**Motions out of order to be rejected**

15. Whenever it has been decided that any motion, amendment, or other matter is out of order, it must be rejected.

**Irrelevance or repetition in debate**

16. The chairperson may:-

   (1) call the attention of the General Meeting to continued irrelevance or tedious repetition on the part of any delegate; and

   (2) direct the delegate to discontinue his or her speech.

**Closure of debate**

17. (1) The closure of a debate may be obtained by a motion made, according to the evident sense of the conference, "That the question be now put".

   (2) No discussion is permitted on that question.

**How questions are to be put**

18. (1) The chairperson must put to the Conference all questions on which it is necessary that a vote shall be taken, first in the affirmative, and then in the negative, and the delegates present and voting thereon must vote by show of voting cards identifying their voting entitlements.

   (2) In rule 18(1), the “specified manner” of voting is the process determined by the Board from time to time.

   (3) To avoid doubt, the specified manner of voting:

       (a) must enable each delegate to vote in a manner which gives effect to its voting entitlements; and

       (b) may involve or include the use of electronic devices.

   (4) The specified manner of voting to apply at any conference must be notified and explained by the chairperson to the General Meeting before the first vote is taken at the General Meeting.

   (5) The chairperson must declare the result to the General Meeting.

**Chairperson may repeat question**

19. The chairperson may:-

   (1) put any question as often as may be necessary to enable him or her to form his opinion as to the result of the voting; or
(2) appoint tellers, to count the number of votes for and against the question.

**Question - how determined**

20. Every question is decided by a majority of votes of the delegates present at any General Meeting and voting on that question.

**Suspension of rules**

21. (1) Any one or more of the foregoing rules of procedure for debates may be suspended by resolution at any conference of the Association.

(2) A resolution under Rule 21(1) must state the purpose of the suspension.
Policy Motions
EXECUTIVE

POLICY STATEMENT REVIEW

MOVER: Cr R Brown (Western Downs)          SECONDER: Cr M de Wit (Brisbane)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Policy Statement 2010 be deleted and replaced with LGAQ Policy Statement 2012 (see attachment)."

CARRIED

SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

POLICY STATEMENT REVIEW – ROAD FUNDING – AMEND CLAUSE 8.1.1.6

MOVER: Cr M Jamieson (Sunshine Coast)       SECONDER: Cr C Thompson (Sunshine Coast)

“That the LGAQ Policy Statement clause 8.1.1.6 be amended to:

“The quantum of Federal and State funds allocated to Local Government for roads should be increased to a level greater than currently provided, but not less than maintained in real terms, to assist councils to maintain roads that have suffered from the accumulative damage as a consequence of several years of extreme wet weather.”

CARRIED
‘A’ Motions
Association Matters

NO. 1 EXECUTIVE

RECEPTION AND ADOPTION OF PRESIDENT’S ANNUAL ADDRESS

MOVER: Cr M de Wit (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr G Able (Logan)

The President’s Annual Address will be read on Tuesday morning, 23 October 2012, and will be formally received and considered on 24 October 2012.

“That the President’s Annual Address for 2011-2012 be received and adopted.”

CARRIED

NO. 2 EXECUTIVE

RECEPTION AND ADOPTION OF THE 116TH ANNUAL REPORT BY THE POLICY EXECUTIVE

MOVER: Cr T McGrady (Mount Isa)  
SECONDER: Cr W Attwood (Etheridge)

The Policy Executive’s Annual Report will be formally received and considered on 24 October 2012.

“That the Annual Report of the Policy Executive for 2011-2012 be received and adopted.”

CARRIED

NO. 3 LGAQ BOARD

RECEPTION AND ADOPTION OF THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITOR’S REPORT

MOVER: Cr M de Wit (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)

The Annual Financial Statements and Auditor’s Report will be formally received and considered on 24 October 2012.

“That the Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2012 and Auditor’s Report be received and adopted.”

CARRIED
GOVERNANCE

NO. 4  SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL
CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION – LOBBYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS IN OTHER STATES FOR SUPPORT
MOVER: Cr P Blundell (Southern Downs) SECONDER: Cr R Bartley (Southern Downs)
“That the Local Government Association of Queensland actively lobby its counterparts in other States and the Northern Territory to support a referendum seeking recognition of local government in the Australian Constitution.”
CARRIED

NO. 5  RICHMOND SHIRE COUNCIL
STATE GOVERNMENT SERVICES – RETENTION IN RURAL AND REMOTE LOCATIONS
MOVER: Cr J Kuhl (Richmond) SECONDER: Cr J Wharton (Richmond)
“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government in support of the retention of State agencies in rural and remote locations such as the Department of Main Roads, Queensland Government Agent Program, Department of Primary Industries. The loss of these services to communities in these areas has far reaching consequences by way of considerable additional travel and cost, loss of staff has a snowballing effect to other services and the economy of the towns generally.”
CARRIED

NO. 6  NORTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL
STATE GOVERNMENT SERVICES – DECENTRALISED DELIVERY
MOVER: Cr D Waugh (North Burnett) SECONDER: Cr K Wendt (North Burnett)
“That the Local Government Association of Queensland congratulate the State Government on its review of red tape reduction and adoption of a decentralised delivery model.”
CARRIED
NO. 7

MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

CRIME & MISCONDUCT COMMISSION – SPEEDIER RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)  SECONDER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Queensland State Government to give consideration to requesting that complaints referred to the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) be dealt with urgently allowing for early outcomes, where possible, for these complaints.”

CARRIED

NO. 8

LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

MATERIAL PERSONAL INTEREST – REMOVAL OF EXCEPTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

MOVER: Cr S Jones (Lockyer Valley)  SECONDER: Cr T Milligan (Lockyer Valley)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to amend the Local Government Act 2009 – Section 172 (2)(f) to remove the exceptions for government entities.”

CARRIED

NO. 9

LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

COUNCILLORS – INTRODUCTION OF RESTRICTIONS ON EMPLOYMENT OF EX-COUNCILLORS WITH FORMER COUNCIL

MOVER: Cr S Jones (Lockyer Valley)  SECONDER: Cr T Milligan (Lockyer Valley)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to amend the Local Government Act 2009 to restrict former councillors from being employed as staff within council that they stood for election within the term of that election.”

LOST
NO. 10  
LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

COUNCILLORS – INCREASED RESTRICTIONS ON OTHER EMPLOYMENT

MOVER: Cr S Jones (Lockyer Valley)  
SECONDER: Cr T Milligan (Lockyer Valley)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to amend the Local Government Act 2009 so that councillors at category 4 and above are considered full time roles and are not entitled to hold other full time employment while a councillor.”

LOST

NO. 11  
MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR REMUNERATION – ABOLITION OF NEED TO PASS RESOLUTION

MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)  
SECONDER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Minister for Local Government to give consideration to amending the Local Government Act 2009 so that councils do not have to pass a resolution to adopt the Remuneration Tribunal’s recommendation each year.”

CARRIED

NO. 12  
SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR REMUNERATION – REVIEW OF COUNCILLOR REMUNERATION MODEL

MOVER: Cr J Brent (Scenic Rim)  
SECONDER: Cr V West (Scenic Rim)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Minister for Local Government, seeking a review of the current methodology for determining elected member remuneration levels to allow individual councils to determine a pay level one category higher or one category lower to their categorisation as determined by the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal.”

LOST
NO. 13  
LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

DISASTER MANAGEMENT – REVIEW OF DISTRICT DISASTER MANAGEMENT GROUP BOUNDARIES AND SUPPORT

MOVER: Cr S Jones (Lockyer Valley)  
SECONDER: Cr T Milligan (Lockyer Valley)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to seek a change in the boundaries at a Disaster District level for the District Disaster Management Groups and that a greater alignment is created with all emergency services.”

CARRIED

NO. 14  
NQLGA/HINCHINBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

TELECONFERENCE FOR COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS – REMOVING EXEMPTIONS

MOVER: Cr P Lynch (Hinchinbrook)  
SECONDER: Cr R Lee Long (Tablelands)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to have Sections 72 and 73 of the Local Government (Operations) Regulation 2010 amended to include:–

(a) Approval for councillors and/or other persons (such as advisers or consultants) to take part in closed council meetings by teleconferencing;  and

(b) Extend teleconferencing approvals to also apply to committee meetings (open and/or closed).”

CARRIED
FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

NO. 15

MOUNT ISA CITY COUNCIL

FUNDING – ROYALTIES FOR THE REGIONS – EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION FOR INTRODUCTION OF PROGRAM

MOVER: Cr T McGrady (Mount Isa)        SECONDER: Cr J McCulloch (Mount Isa)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland write to the State Government to congratulate it for introducing the Royalties for the Regions program.”

CARRIED

NO. 16

EXECUTIVE

FUNDING – TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (TIDS) AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANT AND SUBSIDY PROGRAM (LGGSP) – RESTORED TO PRE-2012 BUDGET LEVELS IN REAL TERMS

MOVER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)     SECONDER: Cr R Brown (Western Downs)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to restore to their full value the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) and Local Government Grant and Subsidy Program (LGGSP) cut in the 2012/13 budget when the State budget returns to surplus in 2014/15.”

CARRIED

NO. 17

NORTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL

FUNDING - ROYALTIES FOR THE REGIONS – INCLUSION OF KEY TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

MOVER: Cr D Waugh (North Burnett)        SECONDER: Cr K Wendt (North Burnett)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to review the Royalties for the Regions program to include key transport infrastructure to the nominated 14 Local Government Areas in the program.”

LOST
NO. 18

GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL/ MOUNT ISA CITY COUNCIL

FUNDING – STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE DIVIDEND AND TAX EQUIVALENT PAYMENTS

MOVER: Cr M Burnett (Gladstone)  
SECONDER: Cr L Neill-Ballantine (Gladstone)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to seek a commitment to maintain the current policy on dividend and tax equivalent payments of Category 1 water entities to their respective councils.”

CARRIED

NO. 19

ETHERIDGE SHIRE COUNCIL

FUNDING – RE-INTRODUCTION OF WATER AND SEWERAGE FUNDING PROGRAMS

MOVER: Cr W Attwood (Etheridge)  
SECONDER: Cr A Baker (Isaac)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to reintroduce a funding programme to assist Category 1 and Special Councils with water and waste water infrastructure development and renewal.”

CARRIED

NO. 20

GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL

RATING POWERS – GENERAL RATES – REMOVAL OF EXEMPTION OF QR NATIONAL

MOVER: Cr M Burnett (Gladstone)  
SECONDER: Cr L Neill-Ballantine (Gladstone)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to amend Section 93 (3) (e) Local Government Act, noting that land held by publicly listed companies not be subject to exemption from General Rates.”

CARRIED
NO. 21
ROCKHAMPTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

DISASTER FUNDING – NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF AND RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS – VALUE FOR MONEY PRICING GUIDELINES – EXTENSION OF FLOOD EVENT DAY LABOUR REIMBURSEMENT

MOVER: Cr M Strelow (Rockhampton)                      SECONDER: Cr B Ludwig (Rockhampton)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to seek a further amendment of the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) to enable local governments in Queensland seek reimbursement of the costs of utilising their respective day labour workforces in undertaking all remediation works under NDRRA following the 2010/11 natural disasters in Queensland under the same conditions as now provided for works associated with that event completed after the Commonwealth Government’s decision of 21 June 2012.”

CARRIED

NO. 22
FNQROC/CASSOWARY COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

DISASTER FUNDING – NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF AND RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT VALUE FOR MONEY PRICING GUIDELINES – INCLUSION OF EMERGENT WORKS

MOVER: Cr B Macdonald (Cassowary Coast)                SECONDER: Cr P Scott (Cook)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Federal Government to include emergent works as part of the Local Government Value for Money Pricing Guidelines.”

CARRIED

NO. 23
FNQROC/CASSOWARY COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

DISASTER FUNDING – NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF AND RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT VALUE FOR MONEY PRICING GUIDELINES – REMOVAL OF 10% CONTRIBUTION AND AMENDING BENCHMARKING PROVISIONS

MOVER: Cr B Macdonald (Cassowary Coast)                SECONDER: Cr P Scott (Cook)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Federal Government:-
a) To remove the requirement for councils to contribute 10% of the day labour component capped at 10% of its rate/utility base as it unfairly affects those councils in disaster prone areas, and
b) To include in section 4 (benchmarking) of the new value for money pricing guidelines the option for councils to go through a prequalification process every two years.”

CARRIED
NO. 24          SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

DISASTER MITIGATION – FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS – STATE-WIDE APPROACH TO BUY-BACK PROPOSAL

MOVER: Cr M Jamieson (Sunshine Coast)        SECONDER: Cr C Thompson (Sunshine Coast)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to develop a Statewide guideline addressing the requirements of the Final Report Recommendation 11.1 of the Floods Commission of Inquiry requiring councils to consider implementing a property buy-back program in areas that are particularly vulnerable to regular flooding, as part of a broader floodplain management strategy.”

CARRIED

NO. 25          LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

DISASTER DECLARATIONS – GREATER AUTONOMY FOR LOCAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT GROUPS

MOVER: Cr S Jones (Lockyer Valley)        SECONDER: Cr T Milligan (Lockyer Valley)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to review the state disaster management arrangements and specifically review the role of the Local Disaster Management Group and District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) in the declaration of disasters with specific consideration to the appointment of a dedicated district disaster declarations officer with broad experience across all hazards and disaster management requirements. In addition, the LDMG be consulted on the appointment of this officer.”

CARRIED

NO. 26          NQLGA/MCKINLAY SHIRE COUNCIL

TAXATION – ZONE TAX OFFSET – RECONSIDERATION OF QUALIFYING CRITERIA

MOVER: Cr B Murphy (McKinlay)        SECONDER: Cr T McGrady (Mount Isa)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Federal Government to amend the qualifying criteria for the Australian Taxation Office Zone Tax Offset, so that only those people who live and work in the zone are eligible for the rebate, not those who either live or work in the zone.”

CARRIED
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

NO. 27  
BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

PLANNING POWERS – INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGES – PERMANENT REGIME REQUIRED AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr G Able (Logan)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to implement a permanent infrastructure charging regime as a matter of priority and ensuring engagement with councils throughout Queensland.”

CARRIED

NO. 28  
GYMPIE REGIONAL COUNCIL

PLANNING POWERS – STATE PLANNING POLICY 4/10 – HEALTHY WATERS – WITHDRAWAL

MOVER: Cr I Petersen (Gympie)  
SECONDER: Cr J Hill (Townsville)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the State Government to withdraw State Planning Policy 4/10 – Healthy Waters as quickly as possible.”

CARRIED

NO. 29  
MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

PLANNING SYSTEM – IDAS – STREAMLINING COASTAL, RIVERINE AND WETLAND WORKS APPROVAL PROCESSES

MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)  
SECONDER: Cr R Britton (Boulia)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Queensland State Government to give consideration to streamlining the approval process to allow local governments to undertake creek drainage works, coastal management works, canal maintenance and dredging and erosion control works, along with works required on mangrove lined drains.”

CARRIED
NO. 30  SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

PLANNING APPROVALS – DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS – REQUIREMENT FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO FORMALLY RESPOND TO REQUESTS REGARDING THE NEED FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

MOVER: Cr P Blundell (Southern Downs)  SECONDER: Cr R Bartley (Southern Downs)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to introduce a requirement that, where a need for government infrastructure has been identified within a Development Application, Government departments be required to provide a formal response to requests regarding the need for that infrastructure.”

CARRIED

NO. 31  IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

PLANNING LEGISLATION – “FILLING OF LAND” FOR AGRICULTURE PURPOSES – CLARIFICATION OF DEFINITION

MOVER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)  SECONDER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning to amend the definition in the Sustainable Planning Act, or the associated Regulations, to clarify under what circumstances within urban and urban fringe areas filling of agricultural land is assessable development.”

CARRIED

NO. 32  BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

REGIONAL PLANS – INTEGRATED POLICY RESPONSES

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  SECONDER: Cr G Able (Logan)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Government to produce new regional plans that address land-use planning and policy integration issues and also include clear direction on economic development and infrastructure priorities and a detailed implementation framework.”

CARRIED
NO. 33  
**BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL**

**INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS – LONG TERM PLANS TO BE PREPARED BY EACH STATE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT**

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr G Able (Logan)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Government to prepare long-term infrastructure plans for each department.”

CARRIED

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NO. 34  
**SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**BUILDING CERTIFIERS – INCREASED PENALTIES FOR APPROVING NON-CONFORMING WORKS**

MOVER: Cr M Jamieson (Sunshine Coast)  
SECONDER: Cr C Thompson (Sunshine Coast)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to increase penalties for major and minor offences under the compliance system.”

CARRIED

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NO. 35  
**TOWNSVILLE REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**BUILDING CERTIFIERS – CALL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGISTRATION SCHEME**

MOVER: Cr J Hill (Townsville)  
SECONDER: Cr P Ernst (Townsville)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Government to establish a Local Government Register of building certifiers under which certifiers licensed by the Building Services Authority must also register with the relevant local government when practicing within its respective jurisdiction.”

CARRIED
NO. 36  
SOUTHERN DWONDS REGIONAL COUNCIL  
WASTE MANAGEMENT – REVIEW OF WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING ACT 2011  
MOVER: Cr P Blundell (Southern Downs)  SECONDER: Cr R Bartley (Southern Downs)  
“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to:  
1. Remove the State Waste Levy amount from the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011;  
2. Simplify Sections 109 and 110 of the Act; and  
3. Undertake a cost/benefit analysis on the local government reporting requirements of the legislation.”  
CARRIED

NO. 37  
BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL/TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL  
CLANDESTINE DRUG LABORATORIES – PUBLIC HEALTH RISKS  
MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  SECONDER: Cr J Hill (Townsville)  
“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government:  
1. To amend the Public Health Act 2005 to remove local government from the responsibility for dealing with public health risks of clandestine drug laboratories in non-workplace settings.  
2. To specifically identify clandestine drug laboratories in non-workplace settings as a state public health risk.”  
CARRIED

NO. 38  
IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL  
CLANDESTINE DRUG LABORATORIES – NOTIFICATIONS AND CREATION OF REGISTER  
MOVER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)  SECONDER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)  
“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to:  
(a) Create a register for home drug laboratory notifications that is managed by the State Government;  
(b) Provide guidelines for the clean-up of home drug laboratory sites; and  
(c) Ensure no responsibilities for the testing, clean-up or register of home drug laboratory sites are devolved to local governments.”  
CARRIED
NO. 39  

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

ASBESTOS - PUBLIC HEALTH RISKS

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr G Able (Logan)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government:

1. To amend the Public Health Act 2005 to remove local government from the responsibility for dealing with public health risks of asbestos in non workplace settings.

2. To specifically identify asbestos in non workplace settings as a state public health risk.”

CARRIED

NO. 40  

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTALLY RELEVANT ACTIVITIES – REVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION REGULATION 2008

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr G Able (Logan)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Government to maintain licensing for higher risk devolved environmentally relevant activities.”

CARRIED

NO. 41  

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTALLY RELEVANT ACTIVITIES – INTRODUCTION OF COMPULSORY CONSULTATION

MOVER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP) to incorporate compulsory consultation as part of any application for any material change of use for an environmentally relevant activity or an amended ERA licence application where DEHP is the assessment manager.”

CARRIED
NO. 42  BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL/ ROCKHAMPTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL OFFSET POLICIES – INTEGRATED APPROACHES REQUIRED

MOVER: Cr B Ludwig (Rockhampton)  SECONDER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to:

1. Adopt an integrated and flexible approach for environmental offsets; and
2. Require environmental offsets to be secured in the corresponding bioregion and ecosystem within the jurisdictional area where the development is proposed.”

CARRIED

NO. 43  BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

NATIVE WILDLIFE – STATE GOVERNMENT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  SECONDER: Cr G Able (Logan)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Government to ensure that the review of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 results in clear legislative provisions that the State is responsible for the management of native wildlife.”

LOST

NO. 44  EXECUTIVE

PEST AND WEED MANAGEMENT - ABOLITION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BIOSECURITY PRECEPT PAYMENTS

MOVER: Cr R Brown (Western Downs)  SECONDER: Cr P Scott (Cook)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to abolish the requirement for local councils to make annual precept payments to the State in relation to pest and weed management.”

LOST
NO. 45

CLONCURRY SHIRE COUNCIL

PEST MANAGEMENT – FERAL ANIMALS – FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT CONTROL

MOVER: Cr K Douglas (Cloncurry)  SECONDER: Cr C Ferguson (Cloncurry)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State and Federal governments to urgently take financial and operational responsibility for feral cat and wild dog control, relieving local government of the responsibility.”

CARRIED

NO. 46

ROCKHAMPTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

VANDALISM – CONFISCATION OF MOTOR VEHICLES ASSOCIATED WITH ACTS OF VANDALISM

MOVER: Cr M Strelow (Rockhampton)  SECONDER: Cr B Ludwig (Rockhampton)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek a meeting with the State Minister for Police with a view to amend the Hooning Legislation to include the confiscation of vehicles driven by the owner of the vehicle in acts of vandalism against public property. In the case of vehicles driven without the consent of the owner and causing acts of vandalism against public property, then the driver be prosecuted under the provisions of the criminal code.”

CARRIED
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

NO. 47

NORTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL

FUNDING – ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS – CONTINUATION OF STATE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

MOVER: Cr K Wendt (North Burnett)          SECONDER: Cr D Waugh (North Burnett)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to ensure funding for key Arts and Cultural Programs are continued at or above their current level, including ongoing financial support for the continuation of the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF), the LGAQ Senior Advisor – Arts and Culture and the Local Government Arts and Culture Reference Group.”

CARRIED
ROADS, TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

NO. 48 IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL
ROAD MANAGEMENT – COST SHARING AGREEMENT – DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS/LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND – FURTHER REVIEW

MOVER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)  SECONDER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland place on hold the Draft 2011 TMR/LGAQ Cost Sharing Agreement and seek further review and input from local government, particularly urban councils.”

CARRIED

NO. 49 IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL
ROAD CLASSIFICATION – DE-MAINING OF STATE-CONTROLLED ROADS – CLARIFICATION OF STATE GOVERNMENT POLICY

MOVER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)  SECONDER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Department of Transport and Main Roads seeking clarification of their policy position on the transfer of responsibility of state-controlled roads to local government across Queensland.”

CARRIED

NO. 50 BARCOO/DIAMANTINA SHIRE COUNCILS
TELECOMMUNICATIONS – EQUALITY ACROSS QUEENSLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

MOVER: Cr J Groves (Barcoo)  SECONDER: Cr G Morton (Diamantina)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Australian and Queensland governments:

1. To ensure that all local governments in Queensland have adequate terrestrial telecommunications backhaul and bandwidth that will support all modern mobile and fixed-line telecommunications technologies and their applications, i.e. mobile and fixed-line voice, data and video technologies;
2. Ensure that this policy extends to communities within their local government area that are considered service hubs for state and local government services, i.e. communities that provide State and local government essential services such as: a police presence, health facility, school, local government office, library or visitor information centre and which have emergency management responsibility; and
3. To introduce a policy of mandating optic fibre telecommunications backhaul, to their and other mainland Queensland communities that are considered ‘service hubs’, and could not be adequately serviced by single-hop high capacity microwave backhaul.”

CARRIED
‘B’
MOTIONS
GOVERNANCE

NO. 51
NQLGA/COOK SHIRE COUNCIL /
MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

RIGHTS OF ENTRY – SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURES FOR ACCESS TO PROPERTIES TO PERFORM WORKS

MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay) SECONDER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to amend various pieces of legislation (including the Public Health Act 2005 and Local Government Act 2009) to implement a streamlined legal process for local governments to enter a property to perform works pursuant to a remedial notice.”

CARRIED

NO. 52
SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS – REDUCTION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT’S EXPOSURE TO LEGAL COSTS

MOVER: Cr P Blundell (Southern Downs) SECONDER: Cr R Bartley (Southern Downs)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Attorney General to amend the Justices Act 1886 and/or Local Government Act 2009 to simplify procedures for the initiation of legal proceedings to reduce the exposure of local governments to legal costs.”

CARRIED

NO. 53
LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS – ESTABLISHING PROTOCOLS FOR MANAGING RELATIONS WITH STATE AND FEDERAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

MOVER: Cr S Jones (Lockyer Valley) SECONDER: Cr T Milligan (Locker Valley)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland establish protocols with the State and Federal Government that will assist in managing the relationship between a local government and its representatives from the State and Federal Governments with a requirement that communications are maintained through the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer of the Council.”

LOST
NO. 54  
LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

ELECTIONS – COMPULSORY TRAINING OF CANDIDATES PRIOR TO NOMINATION

MOVER: Cr S Jones (Lockyer Valley)  
SECONDER: Cr T Milligan (Locker Valley)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to institute changes in the nomination process for first time intending Council candidates to be required to attend a compulsory training session on being a Councillor before nominations are accepted.”

LOST

NO. 55  
LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

“RIGHT TO INFORMATION” – CHANGE OF TERMINOLOGY BACK TO “FREEDOM OF INFORMATION”

MOVER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government requesting that for the sake of public understanding and consistency across Australia, Queensland again come into line with all other Australian states and adopt the terminology “Freedom of Information”.”

CARRIED
FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

NO. 56  LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

DISASTER MANAGEMENT – NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF AND RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS – REVIEW OF APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

MOVER: Cr S Jones (Lockyer Valley)  SECONDER: Cr T Milligan (Locker Valley)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Australian Government to urgently review the application of the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements guidelines to simplify the administration of the funding and payments.”

CARRIED

NO. 57  MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

VALUATION OF LAND – EARLIER RELEASE OF NEW VALUATIONS

MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)  SECONDER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Queensland State Government to give consideration to allowing the release dates for new land valuations to be brought forward to enable better pre-budget analysis by local governments and to allow more time for disputed valuations to be resolved to reduce any post budget general rate adjustments.”

CARRIED
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

NO. 58 MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

CAR PARKING – LOW COST HOUSING PROJECTS – REMOVAL OF EXEMPTION

MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)  SECONDER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Queensland Government to give consideration to amending Chapter 9, Part 5, Public Housing of the Sustainable Act 2009 to remove the blanket exemption for car parking for public housing developments from complying with provisions of the relevant local government planning scheme.”

CARRIED

NO. 59 LOGAN CITY COUNCIL

SWIMMING POOL SAFETY – SWIMMING POOL FENCE APPROVALS/STANDARD CERTIFICATES – ONE APPROVAL SYSTEM REQUIRED

MOVER: Cr G Able (Logan)  SECONDER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Premier and the Minister for Housing & Public Works seeking:

1. Urgent legislative amendments to the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, Building Act 1975 and Building Regulation 2008 to facilitate:

   (a) A single approval system for all swimming pool fencing;

   (b) Swimming pool fencing being deemed "self assessable" development however subject to the current State code MP3.4; and

   (c) Licensed Building Certifiers being deemed "licensed Pool Safety Inspectors" with no further requirement.

2. Comprehensive consultation with local government, the legislative enforcement agency for swimming pool fence compliance, as part of the legislative amendment process.”

CARRIED
NO. 60 ETHERIDGE SHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL – GILBERT RIVER DEVELOPMENT AREA SCHEME – DESIGNATION AS SIGNIFICANT PROJECT

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Coordinator General to have the Gilbert River Development Area Scheme designated as a Significant Project under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971.”

WITHDRAWN

NO. 61 MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOOD DISPUTE REGULATION – EXPANDED COVERAGE

MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)        SECONDER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Queensland State Government to give consideration to the provision of additions to the Neighbourhood Dispute Resolution Act 2011 to cover the following matters:

- Overland flow storm water; and
- Retaining walls under 1 metre high.”

CARRIED
ENVIRONMENTAL & HEALTH SERVICES

NO. 62
NORTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL

AGRICULTURE – SUPPORT FOR DAIRY INDUSTRY

MOVER: Cr D Waugh (North Burnett)  SECONDER: Cr K Wendt (North Burnett)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State and Federal Governments to recognise the plight of the dairy industry within Queensland and to move to set up a fair minimum price to the producer that will allow for the continuation of the dairy industry.”

CARRIED

NO. 63
BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT – AMENDMENTS TO QUEENSLAND LEGISLATION AND POLICIES FOR UNDERTAKING WORKS

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  SECONDER: Cr B Macdonald (Cassowary Coast)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Government to amend relevant Queensland legislation and policies to improve the definitions and ensure processes are improved for undertaking works in waterways.”

CARRIED

NO. 64
LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

PEST MANAGEMENT – FIRE ANTS – MAINTENANCE OF RESOURCES TO MANAGE OUTBREAKS INTO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AREAS

MOVER: Cr S Jones (Lockyer Valley)  SECONDER: Cr T Milligan (Lockyer Valley)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to ensure that resources are maintained in the effort to eradicate Fire Ants, and specifically that the agricultural production areas of South East Queensland are shown priority given the significance of this land to the food production for the state and nation.”

CARRIED
NO. 65

NQLGA/BURDEKIN SHIRE COUNCIL

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT – REMOVE EXTERNAL APPEALS TO QUEENSLAND CIVIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL

MOVER: Cr B Lowis (Burdekin)                     SECONDER: Cr A Gurney (Carpentaria)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make urgent representations to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to amend the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 to remove external appeals to Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT)."

CARRIED

NO. 66

LOGAN CITY COUNCIL

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT – DANGEROUS DOGS – AMENDMENT TO ANIMAL MANAGEMENT (CATS & DOGS) ACT 2008

MOVER: Cr G Able (Logan)                     SECONDER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to implement the changes to the Animal Management (Cats & Dogs) Act as previously identified and requested by the South East Queensland Regional Animal Management Group (SEQRAMG) to manage dangerous dogs and improve community safety.”

CARRIED

NO. 67

TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL

BIOSECURITY PROTECTION – MAINTENANCE OF RESOURCES IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

MOVER: Cr P Ernst (Townsville)                     SECONDER: Cr A Lacey (Palm Island)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to maintain and strengthen resources in North Queensland to reduce the threat of biosecurity risks.”

CARRIED
NO. 68  
BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

COASTAL PLANNING – SUPPORT FOR COUNCILS TO UNDERTAKE ADAPTATION PLANNING REQUIRED BY THE QUEENSLAND COASTAL PLAN

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr G Able (Logan)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Government to provide funding support and assistance to Councils to implement the revised Queensland Coastal Plan, including the coastal adaptation planning provisions.”

CARRIED

NO. 69  
BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

COASTAL PROTECTION POLICIES – COUNCIL IMMUNITY FROM CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr G Able (Logan)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Government to prepare legislative amendments to section 706 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 to provide immunity from claims for compensation for local governments where they are implementing coastal protection and adaptation policies.”

CARRIED

NO. 70  
BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

CARBON PRICING SCHEME – AMENDMENT TO ADDRESS LOCAL GOVERNMENT ISSUES

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr G Able (Logan)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Australian Government to consider local/site specific circumstances that increase the cost impact of the carbon pricing scheme for councils.”

CARRIED
NO. 71  
GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL/ BURKE SHIRE COUNCIL

WASTE MANAGEMENT – INTRODUCTION OF A DRINK CONTAINER REFUND SCHEME

MOVER: Cr M Burnett (Gladstone)  
SECONDER: Cr L Neill-Ballantine (Gladstone)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to introduce a drink container refund scheme (similar to the schemes in other jurisdictions).”

CARRIED

NO. 72  
BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

TRANSFER DUTY – ABOLISH DUTY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THAT PURCHASE LAND FOR CONSERVATION, OPEN SPACE OR FLOOD MITIGATION PURPOSES

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr G Able (Logan)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Government to undertake legislative amendments to remove the requirements for councils to pay transfer duty on the purchase of land for conservation, open space and flood mitigation purposes.”

CARRIED

NO. 73  
MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

POULTRY FARMS – AMENDMENT TO GUIDELINES TO INCLUDE BUFFER ZONES WITHIN FARM BOUNDARY

MOVER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)  
SECONDER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to amend the Queensland Guidelines for Meat Chicken Farms to indicate that poultry farm buffers should be wholly contained within the poultry farm allotment.”

CARRIED
NO. 74  
MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

POULTRY FARMING – STATE GOVERNMENT TO UNDERTAKE ADMINISTRATION OF ERA 4

MOVER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)  
SECONDER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the State Government to give consideration to the administration of ERA 4 Poultry Farming being undertaken by the State Government in line with all other aquaculture and intensive animal industry environmentally relevant activities.”

CARRIED

NO. 75  
MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

POULTRY FARMS – ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS – ODOUR AND DUST ISSUES

MOVER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)  
SECONDER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to give consideration to strengthening and clarifying the enforcement provisions available under the Environmental Protection Act 1994, in particular for the investigation of odour and dust issues originating from poultry farms.”

CARRIED

NO. 76  
LOGAN CITY COUNCIL

FOOD SAFETY – EAT SAFE – ACCEPTANCE AS FOOD BUSINESS RATING SCHEMES FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE FOOD ACT 2006

MOVER: Cr G Able (Logan)  
SECONDER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on Queensland Health to accept the food business rating schemes Eat Safe Logan and Eat Safe Brisbane, with no modifications, as appropriate food business rating schemes for the purposes of the Food Act 2006.”

CARRIED
NO. 77  NORTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL

HEALTH SERVICES – MAINTENANCE OF RURAL AND REGIONAL SERVICES

MOVER: Cr D Waugh (North Burnett)  SECONDER: Cr K Wendt (North Burnett)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to maintain and improve services such as the Queensland Ambulance, Oral Health and Maternity as well as maintaining resources to these services available in regional and rural Queensland.”

CARRIED

NO. 78  NQLGA/CHARTERS TOWERS REGIONAL COUNCIL

HEALTH SERVICES – AUSTRALIAN STANDARD GEOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATION – REMOTENESS AREA (ASGC-RA) SYSTEM – URGENT REVIEW

MOVER: Cr J Cooper (Charters Towers)  SECONDER: Cr F Beveridge (Charters Towers)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Federal Minister for Health to conduct an urgent review of the Australian Standard Geographic Classification – Remoteness Area (ASGC-RA) System to:

• Identify anomalies in the current system which impact on rural medical workforce recruitment and retention;
• Identify positive impacts of the current system to be retained and enhanced where possible; and
• Obtain professional advice regarding options for alterations to the current system.”

CARRIED

NO. 79  LOGAN CITY COUNCIL

WHOOPING COUGH (DTPA) VACCINE - ADDITION TO THE NATIONAL IMMUNISATION PROGRAM SCHEDULE IN QUEENSLAND

MOVER: Cr G Able (Logan)  SECONDER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government requesting approval of funding for the dTpa vaccine for all adults requesting a booster in line with Qld Health vaccination recommendations.”

CARRIED
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

NO. 80  NORTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL

ARTS AND CULTURE – REVIEW PROTOCOL BETWEEN ARTS QUEENSLAND AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

MOVER: Cr D Waugh (North Burnett)  SECONDER: Cr K Wendt (North Burnett)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to renew their commitment to arts and culture within local government by reviewing the 2002 Protocol between Arts Queensland and Local Government in relation to arts and culture development within local communities.”

CARRIED

NO. 81  NORTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE – STREAMLINING OF TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS

MOVER: Cr D Waugh (North Burnett)  SECONDER: Cr K Wendt (North Burnett)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to review the Police Services transfer arrangements with a view to streamlining these arrangements to ensure that the relevant area is not left without a serving police officer.”

CARRIED

NO. 82  NQLGA/ETHERIDGE SHIRE COUNCIL

QUEENSLAND POLICE PROCEDURES – REVIEW OF OVER POLICING AT COMMUNITY EVENTS IN RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

MOVER: Cr W Bethel (Etheridge)  SECONDER: Cr W Attwood (Etheridge)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Minister for Police and Community Safety to review the over-policing of community events in rural and remote communities.”

LOST
ROADS, TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

NO. 83  GYMPIE REGIONAL COUNCIL

ROAD MANAGEMENT – REMOVAL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNMAINTAINED ROADS

MOVER: Cr R Dyne (Gympie)  SECONDER: Cr B Peterson (Mount Isa)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government:

1. To amend the Local Government Act so that councils have no responsibility for roads they did not construct, unless by agreement;

2. To provide funding to upgrade to Council standard those roads that the State Government previously constructed and has ceased to maintain.”

CARRIED

NO. 84  BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

ROAD FREIGHT – INTRODUCTION OF AN INTEGRATED NETWORK FOR SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

MOVER: Cr P Matic (Brisbane)  SECONDER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Queensland Government to work collaboratively with local governments in South East Queensland to plan for and provide appropriate funding for the construction, operation and maintenance of an integrated regional road freight network.”

LOST

NO. 85  NQLGA/ETHERIDGE SHIRE COUNCIL

ROAD CLASSIFICATION – DESIGNATION OF HANN HIGHWAY AS STATE STRATEGIC ROAD

MOVER: Cr W Bethel (Etheridge)  SECONDER: Cr W Attwood (Etheridge)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to have the Hann Highway from the Lynd Junction to Hughenden designated as a State Strategic Road.”

CARRIED
NO. 86  
BOULIA SHIRE COUNCIL

ROAD CLASSIFICATION – BOULIA TO NORTHERN TERRITORY BORDER ROAD DECLARED A STATE ROAD

MOVER: Cr Rick Britton (Boulia)  
SECONDER: Cr S Beauchamp (Boulia)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to gazette the Boulia-Northern Territory Border Road a State Road for the interstate movement of cattle and tourism.”

CARRIED

NO. 87  
ROCKHAMPTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

TELECOMMUNICATION TOWERS – STRICTER CONTROLS ON PROXIMITY TO RESIDENTIAL AND PUBLIC USE AREAS

MOVER: Cr B Ludwig (Rockhampton)  
SECONDER: Cr M Strelow (Rockhampton)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the Federal Government to apply stricter controls and standards on the location of telecommunication towers within residential and public use areas.”

CARRIED
‘C’

MOTIONS
FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

NO. 88  NQLGA/MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL/
BURDEKIN SHIRE COUNCIL

STATE PENALTIES ENFORCEMENT REGISTER (SPER) – IMPROVED RECOVERY OF PENALTIES

MOVER: Cr D Comerford (Mackay)  SECONDER: Cr K Casey (Rockhampton)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State Government to enquire about the outcomes of the PricewaterhouseCoopers Review and the new Government’s plans to improve the operations of SPER.”

CARRIED

NO. 89  MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

ELECTIONS – BANNING OF “HOW TO VOTE” CARDS

MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)  SECONDER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to give consideration to amending legislation to ban “How to Vote” cards at Local Government Elections and replace them with HTV cards inside each polling booth cubicle.”

LOST
ENVIRONMENTAL & HEALTH SERVICES

NO. 90

MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

SHOPPING TROLLEYS – GREATER CONTROL OF ABANDONED SHOPPING TROLLEYS

MOVER: Cr A Sutherland (Moreton Bay)                        SECONDER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Retailers Association of Queensland to have its members regulate the use of shopping trolleys within Shopping Centre Complexes.”

CARRIED

NO. 91

NQLGA/BURKE SHIRE COUNCIL

SOLAR ENERGY IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS – FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND SUBSIDIES

MOVER: Cr E Camp (Burke)                        SECONDER: Cr W Attwood (Etheridge)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Federal Government to implement a Solar Energy Scheme for rural and remote areas not connected to the national grid, which includes a permanent fixed rebate of 50% to offset the costs of installation/expansion or maintenance.”

CARRIED
LATE MOTIONS
URANIUM MINING

MOVER: Cr T McGrady (Mount Isa)  
SECONDER: Cr J McCulloch (Mount Isa)

“That this Conference of the Local Government Association of Queensland congratulates the Queensland Government on their decision to abolish the long standing ban on the mining of uranium in Queensland. We believe that this decision will bring employment and prosperity to our State, particularly regional Queensland.”
“Making a Difference – Growing Queensland’s Four Pillar Economy”

Official Opening

Hon David Crisafulli MP
Minister for Local Government

Introduction – Session Chair

To open our conference here today, we have with us, the Hon David Crisafulli MP, our Minister for Local Government.

David has been a very busy Minister, in his first six or seven months within his Ministerial role. He has been to every Council and he has visited all of our communities. Not only once, but in some cases two and three times! He has been very much a promoter of what the Government has promised us and worked with us on, in our Ten Point Plan. David has continued to engage with the LGAQ extensively, for which we are very thankful.

I suppose David needs little introduction to us in Local Government. He has been the Deputy Mayor of Townsville City Council and was elected there in 2004 as a Councillor. Before that, he has a background in journalism academia and small business. He is a regional bloke from Townsville and certainly understands, and gets, how Queensland works. It is a great privilege for me to ask the Minister to come forward and to open our 116th Conference here today. Please welcome Minister David Crisafulli.

Hon David Crisafulli MP
Minister for Local Government

Thank you very much to you and your Executive, Distinguished Mayors, CEO’s, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all an apology and that is, it is a great shame that the Boss cannot be here to open the Conference. Local Government is near and dear to his heart, but you have got me and you will have me for the day. Thank you very much to those who have expressed an interest in coming to see me for delegations. I am back a little later on, for a question and answer session as well.

Today is not about Campbell Newman and it is not about David Crisafulli. It is about one person! I really want to pay tribute and wish you all the best. And to say to Paul Bell, that it is not often that one individual can dominate a conference. But, I think today is as much a swan song for Paul Bell, as it is for you all coming together.

Despite his boyish good looks, Belly is now 60 years of age and nearly half of his time has been spent serving this great level of Government. I think he has been on the Executive for a dozen years and President for about eight. It is a remarkable contribution, not just to his community in Central Queensland, but to this great level of Government! Paul, we truly salute you and I think we owe him a great round of applause.
He has typified what Local Government people exemplify. That is, an ability to put politics aside to deliver for your communities. It is something that my new level of Government and indeed the Federal level of Government have not been able to master, that yours has. I saw a great example of that yesterday, when the Mayor of Mount Isa (Tony McGrady), came out in such support of the Government's announcement on lifting the ban on uranium mining and a man with very proud Labor traditions, clearly supported the Government, because it was right for his community. It is something that you do time and time again and I salute each and every one of you.

As Paul touched on, I have visited your seventy-three Councils and I have gone back, for those areas that have been unsuccessful in the de-amalgamation push. I understand that each and every one of you who are part of an amalgamated Council, simply, just want to get on with life. We do owe it to those communities, to put forward the best case they can.

But in the case of the fourteen who were unsuccessful, I thought I owed it to them, to be able to go and see why those embers still burnt five years on. In many cases, I think the reason why, is because no one had the decency to turn up and sit down with them (and indeed your Councils), to say why the amalgamations had occurred, and what the Government wanted to achieve.

I am just in awe of the good will that was brought to the table by both parties. I can put my hand on my heart and say, I think I have got something out of each and every one of those meetings and I look forward to those wounds healing in time.

On my visits, I have been upfront and said to you, that I have come with empty pockets. But, we come with a thirst for legislative reform:

- it is something we believe in;
- it is something the Premier campaigned on;
- and we will fulfil the objective of handing powers back to Local Government.

It is at the core belief of this Government that, you are much better placed than we are, to deliver on so many fronts. We tabled in Parliament, those changes to Legislation, which I will be going to Committee and will come back to Parliament in the next couple of weeks, during November. As I indicated to you, we would attempt to do that before the end of the year. I do not see that document as being final.

Despite the fact that we have consulted with both the LGAQ and the Local Government Managers Association (LGMA), indeed, some of the individuals in this room, I don't for one moment doubt, that there will not be further changes. I think there will be further changes through the Committee stage. I think it won't be long before further amendments happen in 2013 and I think that is healthy. I don't believe for one moment that a document shouldn't continue to evolve. But I hope that the document continues to evolve, in favour of getting your level to deliver for your communities, rather than being puppets for George St in Brisbane.

One thing the trip has done for me, is, it has highlighted just how much this level of Government just makes do, with what they have. Whilst a couple of examples I will give you are from smaller Councils (I understand the dynamics are different in larger Councils), When I hear stories of the Mayor of a Western Shire, picking up the childcare worker to take them to work, or the CEO of a Council who doubles as the Undertaker, I know that this level of Government is prepared to do what it takes. Again, I don't for one moment suggest, that they are roles that larger Councils will play, (although Cr Paul Pisasale does tell me that Carl Wulff does know where the bodies are buried). But you find a way to deliver and that is what makes you the level that you are.
2012 has been a wonderful year for us, as a level of government. 2013 must continue to be one where we reform. Today I want to announce what I think is an exciting development in 2013 and that will be the role of the Department that I administer. We are small in number, but I want us to be the department that cracks through the bureaucracy that has bogged you down. Again, this has been highlighted to me on the road, when I have heard stories from Councils that have simply been frustrated, in waiting for bodies like Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) to report back.

Many of you have heard me say this, but when I hear that Councils have waited over four years to lease, one hectare of land to extend a cemetery plot, as part of a twenty thousand open space of town common, I know that something is fundamentally wrong, between the way that the two levels of Government exist.

The role I see of my department is to actually go out there and kick down some doors and bring the decision makers to you. What I want to announce today is - I am asking through this body, to find the best format for the series of workshops to be conducted. But, it is my view, to go out to the communities, sit down with like minded organisations and whether that's through the ROC Mr President, or whether that is through other groupings along similar lines of problems on roads, environmental issues, or whatever it is - it is my intention that I will come out there. Not just with staff from the Department of Local Government, but indeed the staff you need at senior levels from other departments, to bang down those doors and deliver for your community. We have signed a ‘Partners in Government Agreement’ and nothing gave me more pleasure than to see the Premier and Belly do that some months ago.

What I want to see now is the next level of that and to make sure that each and every department of government understands that this document is sacred. This document clearly shows that we believe that, services should be delivered by the level closest to the people, where possible. That is not us dumping on you saying, here you go, go and collect the Waste Levy. That is us saying that we feel, you can deliver services in a far better way than we can, when it affects your community individually.

Each and every one of you would have received a letter from me, regarding our commitment on the ‘Graffiti Stop’. Whilst I can’t say too much today (because we will be formally announcing it at some stage in the next couple of weeks), needless to say I think that shows our commitment. That we believe, that you are a partner in service delivery and that shouldn’t always come, with you having to reach into your pocket!

There is no doubt this has been a tough budget and there is no doubt we have had to make some really, really tough decisions. But there is also no doubt that the state has a bright future. If you separate the performance of Government from the performance of the State, I believe we have got a great story to sell.

I think the Government, will turn the corner and I think the Government has taken steps to do just that. But I think the States economies best days, lay ahead as well.

In that tough budget, there were cut backs across the board, which simply had to happen. Whilst the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program was reduced, in real terms you are going to have quite an expenditure windfall this year, because as you know, monies weren’t expended last calendar year through that program. Only 8 million of the forty five was spent and I can assure you that had nothing to do with either anyone in this room, or your predecessors and it had everything to do with that program being kept as a pork barrelling exercise and announced in February/March, in the lead up to the State Election. The success in convincing the Treasurer to roll over that money, as well as provide new money - so this year there will be 63 million dollars available for councils, through that very worthwhile project.
My challenge to everyone today, is to continue to look for ways to be more efficient. I will do my end of the bargain and another challenge for 2013 will be, to begin the slow process of working with Queensland Treasury Corporation and yourselves, to look at ways of funding depreciation in a different manner than which we do now. It has long been my bug bear, when I was in a similar role to many of you in this room and I have not changed my tune, as I have changed levels of Government. It does not work! There are glaring irregularities in the way that Local Government has to do its depreciation schedules and it is my intention to try to get some relief for you in that regard.

The challenge is also on for you to do the same and it is something to the great credit of Paul, that he has been trumpeting. That is that like the LGAQ has done, you as Councils have to find ways of being more cutting-edge with service delivery. I talk about things like pooling resources!

It is never politically easy, but there are huge efficiencies that can be made, if Councils are willing to share with the neighbouring Shire. I understand the politics of that better than anyone. Can you imagine, Townsville and Cairns having to job share things? I can picture that now Madam Mayor. That would not be a pretty headline, but it has got to be done. It simply has to be done, where there is an opportunity for a saving. You owe it to your communities.

I talk about Public Private Partnerships (PPP’s) and not just on the development front. I have spoken at length about the opportunity for smaller rural shires, to look at surplus land and leasing it for agriculture; I have spoken about larger cities with the opportunity to partner with the private sector; to be able to deliver projects to get social space. To get that civic space and get increase rate base, by using those surplus parcels of land and we as a Government, will back you 100 percent. If it is planning reform that you need to make that work, I would hope that we have shown our true colours in making the changes to the Planning Act that says, ‘We want you to be able to have a greater say in the way planning runs’. If that means you want to upscale a site, to be able to get a development, to make you more sustainable and in the process benefit the community, we will stand shoulder to shoulder with you.

I also talk about programs like ‘Together Townsville’, a successful program from my part of the world. I am sure my Mayor, who is here with you today, will be all too happy to share her experience with that program. It is an opportunity where business, sponsor public events, they get great kudos and in the process they help pay your bills. In the case of Townsville, that generates in excess of one million dollars per year.

It would be remiss of me today, not to talk about something which was a tough and agonising decision and I am sure, through the Local Government networks, would have spread. That is, in today's Government Gazette, I have announced that a Financial Controller has been appointed to the Torres Strait Island Regional Council. Again I stress, it wasn't an easy decision. But, I was determined for that decision not to have been an Administrator, because I do in fact have faith in the new council to be able to turn things around.

There are some huge challenges for Torres Strait Regional Council (TSIRC). Huge challenges! I would like to think, that having that expert advice, from a firm like Price Waterhouse Coopers, might go a long way to being able to turn around some of those financial irregularities. Indeed, setting that Council up. We owe it not just to, each and every State Taxpayer (because the Auditor General has clearly said that there is a risk of the future for that council), but we also owe it to the people of the Torres Strait, to be given every opportunity to be governed by a popularly elected Council and not an Administrator. I wish that community all the best and we will be prepared to work with them.

Can I conclude by saying, you have seen huge changes in both of our levels of government. The greatest turnover of Mayors since the war and quite a few CEO’s as well. You have seen a new State Government!
Whilst this is obviously a political statement from somebody involved in the Government, I would think that there has been a new dawn of relationship between our two levels of Government. There is also a new opportunity for the LGAQ and that opportunity will present itself with fresh leadership. That always brings great opportunities for your sector. A new set of eyes, a new vision! But I can say with my hand on my heart that, whoever succeeds you President, will have mighty big shoes to fill.

Ladies and Gentlemen, congratulations and all the best for the conference!

**Session Chair**

David, can I thank you for your address and for your opening of our Conference. I am sure that as you have gone around and met with all of us at our place, that you have understood the immensity of the task, that the 73 Mayors and councillors undertake and the work that we do on a daily basis.

To be here today and over the next couple of days, as part of our Conference, to take deputations etc, we really appreciate that and your continued involvement during today’s proceedings. It is a good relationship and we really have, as I said, appreciated your openness. Thank you for being such a good mate for Local Government and we are looking forward to that continuing partnership, over the next full term of this Campbell Newman Government.
Presidential Address

Cr Paul Bell AM
President
LGAQ

Acting Lord Mayor of Brisbane Cr Adrian Schrinner, Minister for Local Government the Hon David Crisafulli MP, other members of state and federal parliaments, distinguished guests, our international guests from the Kiribati Local Government Association in Fiji, colleagues in Local Government, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this the 116th LGAQ Annual Conference.

As I did last night at the Welcoming Ceremony, I acknowledge the traditional carers of the land on which we are meeting and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Thank you to the Brisbane City Council for hosting this event as well as their input and enterprise in organising yesterday’s technical tours. Thanks also to our Minister the Hon David Crisafulli MP for opening this year’s conference. David, I have enjoyed working with you in what has been a true partnership between Minister and Local Government. Your energy and commitment to engage has seen you visit every single council in the first six months of office. You truly are a Minister for Local Government and not of Local Government and this is a long overdue breath of fresh air.

One of the things I have practised during my time as President has been to recognise new Mayors and Councillors at conference. I would ask all those newly elected to please stand to be recognised and congratulated for receiving your community’s endorsement. Let all of us old timers congratulate you by acclamation. Welcome to the fold.

This year’s Conference theme says it all “Making a Difference”. It is what we were elected to do. If we link our endeavours with the Newman Government’s pursuit of growing our four pillar economy, there is plenty to do. Our speaker line up as always brings current best practice and thinking from around the globe - yes international, national and local experts who have made a difference and are willing to tell us their stories. Our responsibility over the next three days is to listen and learn, talk among yourselves in sessions linking councils with common interests and tomorrow debate and set policy direction for the next twelve months for your Association, the LGAQ.

Friends, this is my ninth and last address to you as your President. I promise I won’t get indulgent or too philosophical. Up front, I would like to thank Local Government for giving me the opportunity to lead our Association for two terms while having the honour of being the President of the Australian Local Government Association for four years during this time. It is interesting to reflect that I have sat at the Council of Australian Governments with 2 Prime Ministers and worked with 3 federal Local Government Ministers, 3 Premiers of Qld and 5 State Local Government Ministers during that time.

After eight years as your President I have decided that it’s time for me to hand over the reins and it would be remiss of me if I did not thank my two Vice Presidents, Bob Abbot and Cr Margaret de Wit. Bob is now carrying out an excellent job as Mayoral Mentor and I thank Bob for his many years of wise counsel to myself. Margaret de Wit has been my right hand person for many years now and has done the hard yards as Vice President member of LGAQ Board, Policy Executive and ALGA. I would like to thank Margaret for her commitment and friendship over the last term. She has had an impeccable track record and has my support for the future.
My sincere thanks also goes to all of the mayors and councillors who have been part of the LGAQ Executives over the last two terms. These councillors travel from all parts of Qld and the Torres Straits to represent you and to ensure your Association remains anchored to Local Government statewide. I did promise way back when to be a regular visitor to councils at your place and I thank mayors, councillors and CEOs for their open access and hospitality on these visits – it’s been a marvellous and humbling honour and experience. What I have seen achieved across the 73 local government areas of Qld continues to reinforce to me that Local Government is the greatest sphere of government. On a daily basis we make a difference locally and add value to our region, State, Nation and the World.

When I started acting in this role in April 2004 after Noel Playford’s retirement from Local Government, relationships with the State Government were strained but workable. By that stage we had been through ambulance levy punch ups and High Court challenges on councillors’ rights to stand for federal parliament.

In the first 18 months of my term, LGAQ had dust ups over valuation rolls (remember my “the Minister is the red back in the underpants of local government” comment - I’m sure Stephen Robertson hasn’t forgotten!) and DIY asbestos management disagreements. LGAQ bit the bullet and took the lead on the SSS (Size, Shape and Sustainability) project only to be betrayed by Peter Beattie and Andrew Fraser. We endured through Workchoices, supporting our members who wished to avail themselves of that system of industrial relations without ever endorsing it. I and the LGAQ simply acknowledged and supported our individual members right to choose for themselves.

Amalgamation came and went, but then there was Anna Bligh and things got even worse. Her government trashed local government’s finances with decisions such as abolishing the capital subsidy program, artificially capping infrastructure charges and limited SEQ council dividends from water retailing businesses – having forced them to charge ratepayers full tote odds in the first place. All up those three “inspired” State Government decisions cost councils, the majority of this debt resides in larger urban councils, a staggering $900m a year in lost revenue – We in Local Government are used to seeing cost shifting from the State now we are the recipients of debt shifting.

Over the last two years of the Bligh Government, there was a new horror or square up almost on a weekly basis. However, I must say Anna Bligh and her government were superb in their handling of the natural disasters of 2010, 11 and 12.

Despite the former government’s best attempts to sideline us, the LGAQ survived and even prospered. More importantly, as a sphere of government we stayed united ready to fight on another day.

Then there was Campbell Newman, Lord Mayor turned Premier. The Local Government empire didn’t just strike back, it took over the joint. The Premier, Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Local Government in the first Newman Government are all former elected members from our ranks. In fact, one third of the membership of this State Cabinet has graced a council chamber.

Now it’s no secret that I’m not from the conservative side of politics and I wish for eternity it had been my own mob that had righted a decade of wrongs inflicted on councils – but it’s been Campbell’s crew.

The amended Local Government Act, which you will discuss shortly, puts all those old tawdry and petty wrongs to the sword – gone, banished, kaput! Better still the new Act restores the standing of elected members. We are the guilty party no longer.
Folks, we have made a great start with the Newman Government. The LNP endorsed eight of the points contained in our 10 Point Election Policy Plan, the best result ever from an incoming government. Better still, the LGAQ signed with the Premier, the Partners in Government Agreement, a document that places obligations on the Government and its agencies to not only talk the talk when it comes to proper consultation and partnership with local government, but to walk the walk as well.

The odd niggle was always on the cards and six months into this Government, we have been disappointed occasionally by the attitude of some agencies to the importance of upholding those principles of proper engagement contained in that Partners in Government agreement. It is important for all in the Government to realise that it can achieve great things by empowering local communities and working in partnership with us and to enforce discipline across its entire operations.

That said, we have won favourable amendments to a welter of Acts, had crazy regulations repealed, and seen more money overall for councils in their first budget, despite some important programs such as TIDs being cut and individual payments to councils for all nature of things being cut back or abolished.

Better still, the State Government from the Premier down is listening to us. Our Minister picks up the phone when I ring. The Premier has time for a coffee or a chat, and his personal advisors find time on a regular basis to sit down with us. There is no other way of saying it a bloody great start to a new relationship - long may it live.

And that’s just as well, because both levels of government will now and into the future have to work doubly hard to improve things in an important area, that is planning and infrastructure charging. Put simply, the sums don’t add up, big councils are looking down the barrel of massive crippling debts if the system doesn’t change. Someone has to pay for the costly infrastructure associated with new development and for the last five years that someone has been ratepayers. Debt and rates have risen accordingly.

None of us can wish away the fact that council debt has trebled over the past four years, and will double again over the next five years. It’s all driven by infrastructure costs and simply can’t go on.

It’s not a decision the State Government can delay beyond next year, otherwise their debt reduction program and attempt to restore its AAA credit rating will be in jeopardy or alternatively councils will have to significantly cut back or stop spending on new capital infrastructure.

Other big agendas I’m leaving my successor and the Policy Executive to resolve include the need for councils to markedly improve their own productivity, and of course Constitutional Recognition of Local Government. Both subjects will get a fair working over during the course of the conference. There’s a panel session on productivity before lunch today and the Hon Jim Spigelman AC QC, Chair of the Federal Government’s Expert Panel on Recognition of Local Government in the Australian Constitution, of which I was also a member, will address you tomorrow afternoon.

Now, on to improving productivity, and there are a few salient facts to remember. Pound for pound, as the figures we will unveil today show, our workforce has, is, and will remain more productive than those in the state and federal governments. But is that in itself enough? The days of goodies and grants from Canberra and George Street are gone for the foreseeable future. Moreover, as I outlined earlier in my address, the gap between council revenue and expenditure is wide and getting bigger. Colleagues we have entered into what could prove to be a decade plus of austerity.
As is sometimes said in a moment of candour – the good Lord helps those who help themselves. Let me repeat it: the good Lord helps those who help themselves.

No one else is going to give us a hand up or a hand out to cover what the LGAQ believes is a 12-15 percent lift in local government productivity that is needed over the next couple of years to get our finances on an even keel and put a floor under local government aggregate debt levels. That’s not a new claim. I said as much at the Financial Summit at Twin Waters back in early July.

There are positive signs. Overall already in this term council workforce numbers have dropped to below 40,000 for the first time in four years. A number of councils are taking active steps to embrace shared services, cloud computing, better procurement of capital infrastructure and goods and services.

However, it’s only a start and real enduring productivity gains must be secured. It can and must be done, otherwise it’s a fairly grim road ahead for councils – find real sustainable savings or cut services and standards. As much as rate rises equivalent to the true cost of doing business are good financial management, the community won’t wear it – remember the 28 April council poll result.

On the question of Constitutional Recognition of Local Government, while Queensland has lead the way with its million dollar Local Government Image Campaigns, I’ve been disappointed even frustrated at the level of progress elsewhere, to the point that today I can bell the cat (that was a pun folks) and announce that I am putting my hand up for a two year term as President of the ALGA, which will be decided by the middle of next month.

I feel so strongly about this issue and our place in the Federal scene. In public life you can’t wait for things to happen, you have to make them happen and there hasn’t been near enough of that happening. Having another lap as ALGA president and enduring Canberra’s weather wasn’t on my (or my wife’s) to do list. More time at home in Emerald with family and grandkids was, but there is a big job to be done and I’ve learned over many years that history is what you make it.

I’m happy to report that Federal Local Government Minister Simon Crean has moved to set up a parliamentary committee to advance our case. The committee will be announced at the next sitting of federal parliament at the end of this month. ALGA and the state local government associations have already set up a national committee to run the Yes campaign but they will need your help. And that means each and every one of you. If we win this campaign we will make history, and history isn’t made lightly. We all need to be absolutely committed to the task of convincing Australians that it is in their hands to stop this uncertainty surrounding the power of the Commonwealth to provide funds directly to local communities.

I happily commit to do everything within my powers to achieve two things; one ensuring the referendum goes ahead at the time when we can win and secondly that we raise enough money to run a serious campaign. We need a great campaign strategy, the best campaign team and the commitment and energy to execute the whole thing within an inch of our lives – nothing less. Close enough is not good enough on this issue. Winning is not everything, it’s the only thing.

There are three things I’m really proud of during my time as your president and they may not be ones that automatically come to mind.

Firstly, I’m really proud of what LGAQ has done for elected members over the past eight years that I’ve been your leader. I said when I was elected as president in Mackay in 2004 that I wanted to improve your lot and that’s happened.
Through very extensive and persuasive submissions to the Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal (acknowledged in their reports) the LGAQ, and LGAQ alone, has orchestrated an outcome that has our members as the best remunerated elected members of local government in the country – AS YOU SHOULD BE.

Beyond that, we have introduced annual elected member training, accredited courses, mayoral and councillor handbooks, mobile phone apps, study tours, specialised and tailored communications and of course the Three Amigos, Bob Abbot, Joan Sheldon and Hayden Wright – all completely independent and confidential advisors to elected members. No other State Local Government Association in Australia comes anywhere near that in looking after the Mayor and Councillors – not within cooee.

Secondly, I am really proud of what the LGAQ has done for the workforce in training; especially women, the lower paid and indigenous workers. During my almost 30 year public life I’ve been a strong supporter of training and development.

In the last eight years LGAQ in its role as a Registered Training Organisation has expanded its offering to no less than 13 certificate and diploma courses. In all a whopping 2,850 council employees, or one in 13 of the state’s entire council workforce have received formal accreditation through the Association – I think that’s amazing.

Whilst councils have benefitted from a better trained workforce, the transformation in people’s lives is remarkable. Those folk have found themselves doing things they never thought possible and improved their lives – all through training and self improvement.

It’s good for them and even better for us. Better still LGAQ is still innovating in the training space with the Online Learning Seat offerings now available to councils.

Lastly and most importantly I can remember proudly the changes made to the LGAQ itself over the 2008-2012 term. Becoming a Corporations Law public company, splitting out the separate but related roles of the Policy Executive and the Board, fully recasting our corporate strategy, structure, systems and staffing to deliver a truly member focussed organisation. LGAQ stands unique in that regard amongst like Associations and that operating model will continue to pay dividends to member councils for many years.

That change is evidenced by the advent of the Member Services Centre, our Total Solutions offering, Grants Service, council segment groups, half yearly customer surveys, improved policy development processes, and high level member engagement.

Our staff did the equivalent travel of five times around the globe in visiting and engaging our members in the last year alone; personalised council by council focus, partnering and customised service offerings are the new norm, not one size fits all!

Those results are on show for all to see and will continue later this year when we finalise the LGAQ’s Financial Sustainability Research Project where we have formatted the models around council segment groups. For interested councils an interim report is available at the LGAQ Booth in the trade exhibition area.

In closing there are many people I need to thank for not just the last 12 months but the past eight years.
Firstly, Greg Hallam our CEO, I will always admire your capacity to remember the past, engage in the now and look to build the future. I don’t think there is anyone who knows more about Local Government than Greg and his continual study of politics worldwide helps us prepare for the future. We have been through some good times and some tough times during the last eight years and I appreciate your friendship, encouragement and support that has been freely given.

To the three other amigos, Greg Hoffman, Brent Reeman and Glen Beckett, you all have been a good balance for Greg and I, and I will certainly miss the wisdom, wit and professionalism that you always bring to the table. To the LGAQ team thank you for your willingness to participate in the huge steps we have taken to alter our membership based model and service delivery. When I hand back my keys, laptop and phone on Wednesday afternoon the hardest thing for me will be leaving this great team.

Finally, there are two people who have made my role so much easier. Bron Browning who is Greg’s and my PA, you are a wonderful friend and great support. Nothing is ever too difficult and everything is dealt with efficiently. To my wonderful wife Ruth, she has been secretary, research officer, confidante and best mate. None of what I have done, or attempted to do would have been possible without her love and support.

Friends have a great conference, listen, ask questions, learn, create new friendships, expand your network and return to your council ready to do an even better job.

Thank you
Doing it Smarter – Improving Productivity in Local Government

Greg Hallam PSM
Chief Executive Officer LGAQ

I am delighted to be able to speak to you this morning, on the topic of productivity in Local Government and Chair the session on what I think, is the fundamental important topic for Local Government going forward for the balance of the term. I hope you will find it a useful starting point, to help you and you own Council's thinking, on productivity improvement back home.

My fellow panellists today are:
- Greg Jensen, Group General Manager, Community and Customer Services, Redlands City Council;
- Mr Steve Crowe, CEO of Propel Partnerships and Resolute Information Technology;
- Carl Wulff, CEO of Ipswich City Council; and a late ring-in
- Tim Rose the CEO of Local Buy, standing in for Mr Ian Maynard, the head of the Public Service Commission who was urgently called away to talk to the Premier. Of course, those of you would know Ian. He is also a former General Manager at Brisbane City.

So why is ‘Productivity Improvement’ important? Well, for all the reasons President Paul outlined in his address earlier today. That is, there is currently something like, a 900 million dollar hole in Local Government revenue. Councils’ debt has trebled from 1.8 billion, to 5.3 billion in the past four years. The Minister says it will get to 7 billion by the end of this financial year, (that is the 2012/2013 year) and it is likely to double to at least 11 billion by the end of this term.

Without gouging rate payers and or slashing services, all of your infrastructure decay, then, productivity is the only game in town. It is the only policy lever left for us to pull on. That is not to say, that it is Councils fault that we find ourselves in this position. Paul Bell made it very clear about the sorts of debt shifting that had occurred, under the former State Government.

I will be fairly brief in my comments, because the people that follow me, have a lot of really important practical things to say, on how to do it smarter, how to achieve productivity gains and I don’t want to cut into their time.

Some of you know, I actually studied economics at university and that was between rugby practices, visits to Albion Park Race Course for the mid week gallops (back on the sand in those days) and meeting my fellow students, to discus important matters of the day at the refectory (that is uni lingo for the bar). Somewhere in there I did an economics degree. I also spent five years of my life working in Canberra, including Federal Treasury. Looking at all nature of financial and economic issues under some very hard task masters, so I believe I am fairly equipped to talk about these issues.

I need to say up front, Productivity is a very hard thing to define. Economists, practicing and academic, have argued about its measurement for decades. There are two classic methodological approaches, labour market
productivity and what the economists call multi-factor productivity, which includes input such as Capital Spending on the denominator side of the equation.

I need to be really upfront. If you think that economics is a bit woolly and hard to understand, then Productivity Measurement is an even less precise science.

What follows in the slides I will put up in a moment, has never been done before in Queensland Local Government. In reality is a shandied mix of measures which I will explain. I can definitely say however, that all the figures are sourced from published empirical data. So in other words, a Government Agency has produced those numbers. Can I thank particularly, LGAQ’s Principal Advisor Economics and Finance Roland McMillan, who has joined us from the Queensland Treasury and Principal Advisor Workplace Strategy, Gabrielle Dorward, for their excellent work in producing these figures.

The most referenced Papers published in Australia on this subject (if you are interested) are:

1. The State of the Service, which is an annual report by the Australian Public Service Commission and
2. The report on Government Services, which is an annual report from the Productivity Commission.

When the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes productivity data, their methodology is primarily focussed on Gross Domestic Product and GRP measures that are not as suited to service industries, including Local Governments. Past attempts by the ABS to compare productivity across the Government with the private sector's service industries, has really been a very fruitless task.

In its report on Government Services, the Productivity Commission notes, that improving Government Service Provision, can lead to major social and economic benefits. Government's themselves, need to know whether their policies are effective and been implemented efficiently and whether services are reaching those people for whom they are intended.

Government Services are designed to deliver outputs, which in turn are intended to achieve outcomes in the community. To deliver these outputs, Government's devote resources to provide infrastructure and services, for stuff you do each and every day and the result of the outputs on the community are the outcomes, of that service. The rate at which resources are used to make this transformation (I have just talked about what is known as technical efficiency). How well Local Governments manage the use of resources through this process provides opportunities for you, in relation, to your Councils improved efficiency.

In its primary role as a service provider, Local Government can be thought of as a part of the fastest growing industry sector in the economy (about 73% of the economy is the services sector). However, the measurement of performance in the service sector presents some familiar questions.

- How do we measure the quantity of inputs and outputs?
- How do we measure the quality of inputs and outputs?
- How do we represent the relationship between these to establish a performance measure?

For the reasons briefly outlined just a moment ago, if we are in the service industry such as Local Government, we are looking at those technical efficiency measures.

Some examples of these are reported by the Department of Local Government, in its very excellent Queensland Local Government Comparative Information Report series. For those elected members that have never seen that document. It is not simply a matter for staff, you should really have a good read, because you
can see on a standardised basis, how your Council lines up with a whole lot of other Councils and particularly like Councils. That type of measure is also used, in the state of the service reports I referred to, that are produced by the Australian Public Service Commission.

The sorts of things that we are going to have a look at include: Labour costs as a proportion of total operating expenses and changes over time. There are a number of employees, per million dollars of operating expenditure! Like most of the productivity measures used in the industry, these are partial input base measures - they are not the complete picture. Our data has been very heavily influenced in the last three or four years, by a couple of things:

- NDRRA (natural disasters);
- In South East Queensland the transfer of Council staff, from the Councils into the three water retailers;
- And a range of any number of other issues, including the amalgamation of Councils.

But going forward we will have a pretty consistent set of data, now we have had those changes wash through the system.

This first slide really helps explain the relationship between Council employees and the population we are servicing. The bigger the number on the far axis, you will see what has happened here, through the period of amalgamation, where we dipped and the sorts of issues that arose from that. That, I think is one of the better measures we have to look at and it shows conclusively that we are improving. That is very consistent with the overall drop in employment numbers that Paul Bell mentioned. We did peak (I think it was in 2009-2010) at
about 42,500 and we are now down to 39,200 and we believe at the LGAQ, that number is probably heading to somewhere like 37,500.

At the minute at 39,200 members of staff across Local Government in Queensland - they are fulltime equivalents and do take into account contractor numbers. We actually proxy those into the model and you help us do that. At the minute we are at 2008 levels and if we get down to the likes of 37,500 or south of that number, we are looking at employment levels back to about 2004. As opposed to the State Public Sector which grew like topsy, we have actually been going the other way.

This is a nice little graph and it makes a lot of sense to me. It is the ratio of population to Council fulltime equivalents, by Council segments. These are the Council segments that we use and you will see obviously, through economies of scale and bigger populations in those areas, the SEQ Councils have a capacity to achieve more through economies of scope and scale. Obviously the smaller you are, relative to the population, you are going to be a bigger percentage. None of that should be a shock, but will just give you a feel for where things are.
This is a really promising slide. It shows you where we are spending our money and the improvement. When you learn the dark arts of economics, you can draw the graphs and curves and scale them to produce the argument you want, but you can't play with the trend line. The trend line is the trend line! So this is a positive slide. You will see that we are actually making serious progress there.
This is wages and salaries, as a percentage of total Council Operating Expenditure over that period. You can see the sorts of improvements. You can see when we hit the wall with amalgamation. As you all know, we had a 7% increase in that particular year, that was forced upon us by the transitional regulations, which required you to pay the highest salary and the highest conditions of all the Councils that were amalgamating, to everyone in that newly 'Amalgamated Council'. You can see the results there. But since then we have actually picked up.

One of the measures I want to leave you with is, that other than dollar costs, some of these measures look at turnover and levels of absenteeism and the like. For those Councils that subscribe to the LGAQ HR Metric Series (which is a fantastic series), we do measure in that system:

- absenteeism turnover;
- leave liability;
- lost time incident frequency rates; and
- contractor spend.

Then we actually bench mark between Councils. So, if you are not using the LGAQ HR Metrics, then you are not interested in productivity in your workforce because, this will give you a very, very, very good comparator, between how your Council operates and similar Councils.

As I said, I would be brief. I just wanted to set the scene. In a few quick words: overall council workforce numbers are dropping, noting some variability about that, because of all the things that have happened in the last four years, but they are going south, we know that! There have been some external influences on those, on all the productivity measures we have been able to use (using published empirical data from independent sources), we are improving! But, and the big but is, we have this particular problem, where we do not have
enough revenue. We can all go out there and increase rates, but we probably won't be seeing many of you back here in four years time at the next conference (straight after the election that is).
Productivity Panel

Chair: Greg Hallam PSM
Chief Executive Officer LGAQ

Introduction – Session Chair

It is my pleasure to bring people along and have them speak to you, about their specific circumstances. That is the aggregate picture! That is what it looks like in Local Government land. Here are some great presenters now to talk to you about how they have achieved, Productivity Improvements in their Council and the first speaker is Greg Jensen the Group General Manager, Community and Customer Services Redlands City Council.

Greg Jensen
Group Manager, Community and Customer Services
Redland City Council

Thank you Greg and good morning everyone. I haven't prepared any slides or any particular notes. It is just a quick introduction and an overview of what we have achieved at Redlands, in a number of particular areas. Some of the most significant ones have been in relation to service reviews that have been occurring over a number of years in Council. Looking at "Is Council in the best position to deliver a particular service?"

Quite often Councils are in a situation whereby, early in the commencement of the service, through a lack of other suitable other providers, lack of market maturity out there to deliver services, the Council responds to their residents needs and their local community, to try to provide a service, which the community is actually saying, is needed at the time. Local Government often rises to that occasion and as a result incurs significant costs in doing that. Establishment costs, as well as employing staff, developing systems etc.

With Redland City Council, we have been observing the market for some time. Particularly in the areas of family day care, long day care, school age care and also age care. Up until recently, our Council has provided all of those services within its local community. Those services have been highly valued by the community. They are at a very, very high quality as well. But, is that the domain of Local Government, to continue to deliver those particular services, where there are adequate service providers which can provide good quality services as well?

So our review process was really driven by:
- looking at the market place;
- looking at our efficiency to deliver those particular services;
- looking at whether that is the most efficient use of resources for a Local Government.

Or should we actually be looking at what we regard as our core services? Those services which are the primary domain of Local Government, those services which aren't provided by other organisations!

Through the process we have adopted, we have looked at (obviously), our financial impact of that, the return to Council and most of those services did provide a positive return to Council. It also came to the costs in relation to management overhead, Council hoping to be involved in (often commercial decisions), where perhaps there are other more flexible players available in the market place.
So through those particular processes we looked at, the ability for other providers to meet the gap and that has been achieved through transitioning of services. A few years ago we achieved that in long day care and family day care. We are going through the process right now (even as of today), in relation to school age care, transitioning those services to other providers, which can provide them efficiently, very effectively on behalf of our community and limit the cost to serve as well - so there is not an upward pressure on those particular services, for the people who are going to consume them.

We are also potentially looking at other services which we are currently delivering as well. So that is the external service delivery to Council.

But also from internal service delivery perspective, we have undertaken a project over the last year, looking at our ability to engage our customers more effectively. We currently have a national and state award winning customer service centre, which is the face to face component. We have a very high reputation for that. We look at the range of products and services we deliver and the training associated with those particular staff.

Coupled with that, there are shifts in the way people want to do business with Council now days. They don't want to come in between 8.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday. People work shift work, they have busy lives and they often commute long distances to their own work. We are looking at a way of engaging people, in a broader spectrum of hours and different channels for engagement as well.

The contact centre is our first step beyond our customer service centre - looking at people being able to contact Council via phone. Potentially there is the ability to expand the spread of hours beyond that, to enable the community to conduct business with Council, without a significant increase in cost to serve.

By aggregating our resources as well, we are pulling areas which are perhaps specialised in say, plumbing, building or rates etc, we are pulling those specialist officers out, aggregating them together in one particular pool and looking at efficiencies through our systems and the ability for people to answer a broad spectrum of questions to the customer.

This means:
1. They are not bounced around the organisation;
2. The amount of training we can invest in those people is focussed;
3. The consistency and quality of the responses will be more managed and more appropriate across the organisation;
4. The aggregation of those resources will enable people to find efficiencies within the departments themselves.

Our next phase is to continue that, to what we call E-Service Delivery. In our first phase we will be looking at setting up the direct telephone contact. In our phase two to three, we will be looking at increasing the number of those services drawn into the contact centre and also looking again down an E-Service delivery path. Getting down to the stage of even using, smart apps on the smart phone, so people can transact business with Council, to varying degrees of course. It is obviously more difficult to lodge a very complex planning application on your i-phone, but there are certain transactions you can occur at low cost.

These are all designed to:
1. Improve the customers experience dealing with Council;
2. To improve their ability to deal with Council and;
3. To drive the cost to serve down in the organisation,
Without loss of capacity within the Council and without loss of service quality to the community!

They are the main drivers we have been looking at over the last few years. We are about to embark on the Contact Centre Project, which we hope to have fully implemented by 1 July 2013, then rolling out phases two and three from there. So our real driver is looking at trying to be sustainable in the medium to long term. Just as Greg has mentioned, we haven't got an endless supply of income. We need to look at what resources we have currently got. Whether it be people, infrastructure or finances and see how we can increasingly serve our community, respond flexibly to that community, without increasing the dollar cost to the community.
I have got a bit of a different perspective really, in terms of, what is productivity and how ‘can we’, drive greater degrees of productivity through our organisations! I thought Daniel made a really fascinating point this morning about entrepreneurship, in terms of ‘it isn't necessarily always something which is new’. It isn't always necessarily something which is hugely innovative. Quite often it is about stealing and massaging some great ideas from elsewhere, but actually overlaying them with a really interesting local flavour.

That is essentially what Propel has been doing with the LGAQ for the past five or six years. We have brought some ideas from the UK and from the States and from other areas of the world, where organisations in the public service, have been innovating in a more direct way with the private sector, to deliver real productivity gains within the public sector. That is really what Propel is all about. It is about, how ‘can we’ work with Councils to deliver real, meaningful, hard, financial, efficiencies, overlaid with real hard customer service improvement benefits. That is pretty much what we do!

Just a couple of examples of where we have seen that type of productivity efficiency overseas:

**New York - 311**
A really good example is what we saw in New York three or four years ago. Something which is pretty straightforward – 311! If you are in New York City or New York State, pretty much anywhere at all within the greater New York Region, you just dial one phone number (311) and you can access any service - State, Local or Federal. It is simple!

- If you want to quit smoking, you will see it on the side of a bus - call 311.
- If you want to pay a parking fine - call 311.

When you actually get inside the Service Centre (that service 311), it is a fascinating place to be. What you have in there are cross skilled, multi functional, very highly trained employees that work for different institutions of the Government, whether it is State, Local or Federal. They all have fantastically high levels of training. They are operating on, pretty much a commercial model. They are driven to succeed, they are incentive to succeed, their Managers are incentive to succeed in terms of financial efficiency gains, hard cash benefits, together with service improvement benefits.

Similarly we took our delegation of Councillors, Mayors and CEO’s across to the UK (a number of years ago now, back in 2005 or 2006) to take a look at shared services. This is something which is very topical at the moment in Queensland. It is very topical generally across Australia. But it still has this rather sensitive parochialism about it.

Why on earth would Councils share services across borders? Well, there is 85 different ratings functions in Queensland, there is 85 different dog licensing functions in Queensland, there are 85 different customer service environments in Queensland, across individual Councils! I put it to you that that is actually an enormous burden on your Councils’. It is an enormous burden on your rate payers. When you take a look at the way that some of the Municipalities overseas have actually addressed this issue, it is actually quite fascinating.

**London Borough Bromley - Rates**
London Borough Bromley, a large Council in London put together a relationship with a company called Capita back in the early 2000's around their rates. They had a problem with delivering an effective, efficient rate service. It was a very high cost to serve, for their customer base, or their rate payers. They brought in a Partner to work with them and it was very successful. It was remarkably successful! They got the unit cost to serve, down to a manageable level and the Councillors and the CEO were very pleased with that.

But what then happened was, the other Councils around the region saw what was going on and decided that they would like a far more effective rate service as well. At the end of the day, that is where your cash comes from, it is a significant source of Council Revenue. It is important that it is dealt with efficiently. Whether that is collecting the rates when they go out, or whether it is collecting the arrears if people choose not to pay.

What we ended up seeing was, the creation almost by stealth, of a fully functional shared services entity in a Council (the London Borough Bromley), were managed under, pretty much a commercially focussed mechanism with a partner. Now that delivered huge benefits, huge financial benefits to Councils right away across the UK! They didn’t care where that service was being delivered from, so long as it was cost effective, it was efficient and it enabled them to manage peaks and troughs in business areas.

When we turn to Queensland and what the possibilities are here, the possibilities are pretty much endless. Australia still, is pretty much virgin territory for the public sector engaging with the commercial sector (with the private sector), to deliver long term productivity efficiency gains.

There is one wonderful example (I am not going to steal Carl Wulff's thunder as I know he is going to speak about Ipswich shortly). We have actually put one of these relationships in place with Ipswich. It is now four years old and it is the first time it was tried in Australia. It is bedded in, it is a ten year relationship and it has been remarkably successful. We have never, in the four years that I have been involved with Ipswich, had cause to revert to any contracts that we have in place between us. We have very powerful Governors' arrangements in place.

The real benefit, of the productivity gains that we put in place with Ipswich and that is with a number of Ipswich's staff being managed by a commercial sector organisation - Propel. All be it - it is an entity of the LGAQ, but we operate as a commercial venture. The benefit of that is seen in the raw results and the hard numbers. On Ipswich's own figures (not mine), depending on which service area you look at (and we deliver a lot of services on behalf of Ipswich. All the way through from their customer answering services, all of their rates, all of the Councils' licensing and registration functions), anywhere between 30 and a 25% efficiency gain, over the course of the past four years.

That isn't through some tricky accounting mechanism. That actually involved Propel and the services that we have created with Ipswich. Handing Ipswich City Council a couple of cheques, this year, $600,000.00 in pure financial, hard, efficiency savings. They are real dollars. That is a measure of what can be achieved if two partners want to work together, in a sensitive creative way. That partnership goes from strength to strength.

How have we done that? We have done it through being sensitive to that Council's requirements. We have done it by working with the Council's staff, every day and for every hour, of every day. But we have changed a few things! We have implemented new processes. Working with the Council, we have implemented some marvellous state of the art technology.

But the key to it all I suppose, is making sure there is a real hard focus on what really matters and that is the service that is provided to the customer. It is making sure, that every time there is an engagement with a customer, that from a Council perspective it is a cost effective engagement.
Now, Greg made reference before to the City of Redlands and their award winning Customer Service Centre, where they are having a major engagement on a face to face basis with their customer groups. What they have recognised over time is, that actually, that is quite an expensive way of transacting with customers and they are seeking to amend that model, to make it a more cost effective way of delivering services.

I suppose Ipswich have already gone down that path. The actual level of face to face customer engagement in that Council is actually remarkably low. But that is ok, because the customer can engage with e-services, or they can engage over the phone. They can walk in if they choose to, but they have been given a whole raft of alternative access channels, in which to engage with the Council and it works remarkably well.

That open relationship with Ipswich, is based on open understanding, mutual respect between the two partners of what can be achieved over time and not taking too many risks. That is really, really important, in terms of managing productivity gains. This isn't about slash and burn. It is not about making gains overnight. It requires a lot of work! It requires putting the effort in and it requires a really sensible focus on what is really important.

All the staff that work with us in Ipswich, are multi functional and they are cross trained. If you have got somebody who is working on the switch board, they can also manage a rates enquiry. If you have got somebody that is managing a rates enquiry, they can also double up and work in the LGAQ's Member Services Centre. But incidentally we also deliver, from the same infrastructure out at Ipswich, a great example of the services being shared and technology investment, which belongs to Ipswich, which is being leveraged for commercial gain!

Just a really quick insight into how these types of relationships can work:
It is working at Ipswich, it has worked elsewhere and productivity really should be measured in terms of, not just what it means in terms of performance of individual employees. You have also got to measure it in terms of, what the real tangible financial dollar saving is, to your organisation. Measured over a period of time, audited and not some tricky financial arrangement whereby you can benefit bank and benefit share and things like that. It has to be put down to dollars in the bank and what else you can do with the money you save and how you can deliver services better to your customer base over the long term.

**Carl Wulff**
**Chief Executive Officer**
**Ipswich City Council**

I had some notes here, but Steve talked about all my stuff, so I won't worry about those. I love that - he says "I not going to steal my thunder" and then proceeds to tell me all the stuff we do at Ipswich. I might not so much talk about what we do at Ipswich, because Steve has covered that pretty well. Just a couple of things! The partnership is five years long next month, not four. So we have been in it for a long time. It was not easy, it was hard work to start with and we are probably reaping the benefits now, as Steve said. The real cost saving (we are sharing that at the moment with Propel), our real cost saving in dollar terms on an annual basis, is a seven figure sum. So, it is worth doing.

It is not just the cost saving that we get from the reduction in cost of providing the service - I will just give you an example and it will be interesting, some of you probably don't know and some of you will probably go away and try to find out - what your rate arrears are. That is a cash flow impact on your business. Our rate arrears are 2.5% and I would doubt that too many Councils are anywhere near 2.5%. I know some Council's are
double digit rate arrears and that is in a very tough environmental, economic climate at the moment. We have been able to get our rate arrears down to historic lows of 2.5%. That means you have got a lot more cash coming in the door. We do that through our Propel Partnership and through our Contact Centre.

Our Contact Centre doesn't just talk to people - it does a whole range of other things, as has been outlined. I think from Council's perspective, five years ago, we really didn't know what our service levels were. We didn't know what our performance levels were and we were forced to find those out, because we were entering into a commercial arrangement, where we were going to pay our partner on the basis of performance and savings. So, if you don't know where your starting point is, you can't pay money and I think most Council's don't really know where they are really at the moment.

They think they know, but they have never really been pushed to actually put it into a contract, where they are going to pay out money on the basis of what they think their performance levels are. So, to give you an example, when we started the partnership we thought our first point of contact with our customers - that if you rang our Council - the first person you talked to fixed your problem. We thought that we were probably at around the 50% mark. In reality we were probably below that. At the moment, every three out of four people that ring our contact centre as a customer get their problem solved with the person they first speak to. It might be interesting for you to go away and just check out how many times that happens in your organisation. Because I know I have checked this in other organisations I have worked in and I have gone through five and six difference people to get an answer. To get to that level is a very high level.

The other safeguard we have put in place is, we survey our customers every three months. Not just any customers, we pick the customers from within the group that have actually interacted with us in the last three months. It is a very black and white survey. We ask them: Were you satisfied or were you not satisfied? It is not a sliding scale. People won't say they are satisfied if they are not! We got an 89% satisfaction level from the last survey results from our customer survey base of 2,000 customers. That is an amazingly high result and that included things like compliance, parking tickets, dog registrations and those sorts of things. We don't just focus on the nice things. We focus on a spread of customer service issues that we have had contact with our customers for.

I think it is a great model. It works really well. It is a model that unfortunately (I think what will happen is) people will try to replicate. Every Council will want to have the same model. That is what we do really well in Local Government - we all replicate the same system over and over and over again, at a high cost.

The biggest detractor for Local Government to be productive is parochiality, because we have got 73 different payroll systems, 73 rating systems people doing that process and really it is all the same process. But, we all individually want to own that process and the parochiality of Local Government will detract from us ever being very productive.

Local Government, as most Government's, talk a lot about productivity but don't do a lot about it in a lot of cases. What we do, do about it is, we do something when we are faced with a crisis. The water crisis of a few years ago is a classic response, ‘that Government's respond when there is an obvious crisis’.

As has been evident for at least ten years, there is an obvious crisis facing us as organisations. The first part of that crisis is starting to show up. If you look up the ‘Age Wave’, you will see the first retirees (or the Baby Boomers) are starting to retire in big numbers now. Costello came down with a Generation Report some time ago, that indicated tax take was going to drop and that is certainly going to happen. The current Federal Government are talking about that!
That reality will probably hit really hard on your organisations in ten or fifteen years, because there won't be the money you are getting now from State and Federal, regardless of if the economy is good, bad or otherwise. The importance for you is, to do something about it now. We have taken five years to build this model and get the savings. You can't turn on the productivity over night. It needs long term planning and long term commitment. Probably the biggest savings we get as an organisation comes from partnerships, with the private sector.

With Propel, we have a partnership with Data3 on our IT stuff and we have a partnership around some of our capital works delivery. So our most productive partnerships unfortunately, are with the private sector and not within Local Government itself. But I think there is a real opportunity for Local Governments to partner with each other and get some of those shared savings across the sector.

Tim Rose  
Chief Executive Officer  
Local Buy

I want to talk to you all today, about ways of saving money through collaboration and negotiation. Telstra today are the sponsor of this event and I just thought I would talk briefly about, what we have been doing with Telstra. We have been negotiating a contract with Telstra on behalf of Local Government for about the last six months. We have come up with an arrangement that is going to significantly, save Councils money. The arrangement has been in place for only about a month or so, but through it you can acquire fixed, mobile and data services, for significantly less than what you previously have. So, I would urge all of the Councils to engage with their Account Managers, with Telstra and start looking at the new agreement, because there is easy money to be saved there.

The other thing I wanted to briefly mention was there are significant opportunities for Council to save money, through collaboration. We did a street light negotiation several years ago, where we gathered all ‘the spend’ of the SEQ Councils, including Ipswich, the Gold Coast and others and put together their accounts. Through that process, Local Buy was able to save all those Council’s about $6 million. When you are looking for opportunities to save money, please look across your borders. Get together and make sure you are using your neighbours spend and your own spend together. Whether it be for cutting down transport costs (particularly when you are in Western Queensland), it is an ideal way to save money without too much pain or agony.

Question and Answer Session

Comment/Question:  
Councillor Able - Logan City Council

Greg, have you done any fact finding in regards to what rates were some twenty years ago and as comparable with today? For arguments sake, my rate bill twenty years ago was $1,000.00 a year ($20.00 a week), but my rate bill today is $50.00 a week, which is $2,500.00 per year. But in that, I am getting a lot more services. I am getting safety cameras, I am getting two bins for the garbage, I am getting a lot more services. Libraries are better, roads are better! I am just wondering whether we are panicking about reducing or rather, not educating our community about - the rates have gone up, but the services have gotten better.

Response
That is a good question you have raised. We do that sort of benchmarking. Local Government rates have kept pace with inflation and probably over the last decade, prior to the last term of Government (2008-2012), they have probably grown by about 1 to 1.5% more than CPI. Which in most part is the fact, there are new lots coming into the system. Yes...... I think one of those slides showed, very conclusively that we are servicing more people with the resources available to us. And, yes we are producing more services. It would be absolutely impossible for the LGAQ to do that, for individual Councils! We do not have the data you have, but we would be really keen to see Councils do that. What we do is, 'do that work on an aggregate level', so we can represent that position to State and Federal Government.

Comment/Question:
Terry Brennan

Just a question in relation to the Propel arrangement! Just interested in whether there is any sort of scale, or size of organisation, population, that type of thing, that you feel lends itself more to types of arrangement you entered into, or do you think it is scalable to any size Council?

Response

In terms of scalability: Ipswich was a really good test case in many respects, for this type of service delivery model. It is a rapidly growing Council, population is expected to double within the next decade we believe. It did provide us with a really good launch platform in terms of driving through those efficiencies - long term efficiencies, in a number of different service delivery areas.

So whether or not it is scalable....... the answer to that is, yes! Carl made a really interesting point in terms of attempting to duplicate the Ipswich model itself. For a Council of your size I that wouldn’t be a smart move. Because in terms of the on the ground scale, that enables this to operate in a commercial sense, as it does in Ipswich, that wouldn’t be there.

Having said that, the ability to create and put in place something which is scaled, for an organisation of your size, is very real. There are models around that can enable that to happen. To a certain degree I would probably argue that, the bigger opportunity (particularly for regional Councils), is to look at how we can collaborate in terms of, building some type of a shared service environment that a number of Councils can access. Some type of a regional hub, if you like.

You start small! You start with a couple of service areas and you use an organisation (it needn’t be Propel, it can be any number of other organisations out there like Propel), but you use Propel as the glue. The transformation glue if you like. The Organisation that can help drive the benefits, that can set these things up. More importantly, they are there for the long term with you, because as soon as you take your eye off these initiatives the dollars go, the enthusiasm wanes and Councils revert to some of the bad old ways.

Just an example of that is what happened in Western Australia, with the State Government Shared Services Initiative. It collapsed with a heap of debt, no proven benefits (that is from the official report from State Government Shared Services Initiative). Too big and driven itself by Government! That is the real problem. That was the fundamental problem they had. They believed they could just do it to themselves, for themselves, by themselves and quickly. That just doesn't work. That has been proven across just about every democracy in the civilised world,
where they have attempted some sort of shared services. It has to be scaled and it has to have a driver and the driver has to remain as the glue for a period of time.

Comment/Question:
Cr Pam Parker, Mayor, Logan City Council

Carl, $600,000.00 return last year (five years in the Propel Program), how long did it take before you got your initial return? What had to occur, to get that return? What was the reduction in staff?

Response

Staff: Let me address the staff - we didn't have a reduction in staff. We just didn't replace them, so we didn't throw people out the door, we just dealt with that quietly over a period of years through natural attrition and redeployment, where that was appropriate.

Return

The year before last was a very small amount of return. The last year was the first time. The arrangement with Propel is, that basically Propel get paid from the savings. They get first cut. Their costs are paid out of the savings over time and when those savings have paid the Propel cost, then the cost are split on a fifty, fifty basis. That is where we are at now. So the big dollars are coming five years into the partnership.

As I have said, we have made, not just savings from dollar return through this partnership, we have actually made savings from our cash flow improvements, from a much better rate income stream than what we had. Our arrears of rates were something like 5% before we started this process. For a Council our size, that is quite significant in dollars per year coming in as cash flow.

Comment/Question:
Cr Barry Muir, Mayor, Blackall - Tambo Regional Council

It seems to me we are dealing with two different races here. I can understand consultants and things like for Ipswich City Council, but you are dealing with numbers, you are dealing in a country where 85% of the population lives on the sea board. You have got much bigger population areas. To try and apply the same criteria, the same thing to small populated rural shires, just wouldn't apply where the actual Shire Council provides most of the employment to keep the towns viable. So we are looking at two different aspects here. There is big, there is huge and there is us.

Response

Barry, you make a really good point. I think Paul Bell said it and I have said it. The real issue about those Council's that haven't got enough revenue (they have had their revenue streams sliced significantly), are the top twenty, twenty five Councils. They are the ones that are hurting in that $900 million dollars that has been taken away from them the last couple of years.

I suppose though in lots of ways, things like the Member Services Centre we operate, Local Government Mutual, Local Government Work Care and Local Buy are all examples of where it does work. Where you can't have the
expert in your Council because of where you are (that is fully understood), you do use the bigger whole, through LGAQ from one of our subsidiaries to discharge your council’s obligations.

There are some good examples where it can be done. I suppose though, does every Council need to have their own payroll system? They are the sorts of things that Carl put on the table and I think that they remain valid. But we do understand that, in your situation and in Indigenous Councils situations, there are different drivers, but there are some things that do lend themselves.

Session Chair

If we don't as a system and particularly the larger Councils, deal with that loss of revenue and the other challenges that Carl indicated were coming, then we are only left with two alternatives. That is to stop building or cut services. There is no magic pudding and as Carl has indicated, it is not something you do over night. For those of you who are in the first six months of their term, this is a challenge in terms of the rest of your term.
Three LGAQ Amigos

Session Chair: Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services.
LGAQ

Hon Joan Sheldon AM - Ethics Advisor
Bob Abbot - Mayoral Advisor
Hayden Wright - Elected Member Advisor

Introduction

Joan Sheldon, Bob Abbot and Hayden Wright (Local Government's Three Amigos) provide free independent and confidential advisory services, that are unmatched by any other Local Government jurisdiction in Australia. Today they are joined by the LGAQ's General Manager Assist, Glen Beckett to discuss how best to navigate, the sometimes complicated world of Local Government.

Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services, LGAQ

Good afternoon delegates, thank you very much for your time this afternoon and welcome to our Three Amigos up the front. Unlike their famous fictional cousins from the movies, I can assure you that our advisors are very much the real deal. To start with this morning, I think it is note-worthy to highlight that the six months since the Local Government Elections in March, our three advisors sitting here on stage, have already provided individual advice, to over seventy elected members from around the state. If you stop now and look around the room, that is more than one in ten of you. Under the arrangements we have with our advisors, I would like to stress that confidentiality is always assured!

If you happen to be one of those people who have spoken to Joan, Bob or Hayden, those conversations, very much remain private. Even though we at the LGAQ are not aware as to who has spoken to our advisors, we are very pleased that a substantial number of you have taken the opportunity, to access their support services. This level of activity (as you can expect), has kept our advisors very busy. Pleasingly it also demonstrates the importance of having access to some trusted advisors, who are able to provide an independent and unbiased perspective, on matters that may be causing anxiety or concern.

As we all know, Local Government at times can get complicated. It is good to know that there are experienced, knowledgeable people that you can turn to for guidance. The LGAQ is very pleased to make available to you, at no cost, Joan, Bob and Hayden. Together our three advisors are another great example of the benefits your Council receives, as a member of the Association.

Today in the time that we have, we are going to showcase some of these capacities. We will do this by presenting to you, some hypothetical scenario's! I will then ask each of our advisors in turn, to provide some commentary from their respective areas of expertise.

At this point, I would just like to pause and make the comment that, whenever you are faced with trouble and you need to seek advice - it is the LGAQ's view and indeed the view of our advisors, that the first place you should always turn, is your CEO. Your CEO is a great resource and would likely be very well placed to answer any immediate questions that you have, that are respective to your personal circumstances. Joan,
Bob and Hayden act simply as a safety net and are there for all those other times, when you feel that there is a need to access some independent advice or guidance.

Let me now quickly introduce our three advisors.

Joan Sheldon - A former Deputy Premier and Treasurer, is our Local Government Ethics Advisor. She is available to take calls from Mayors, Councillors and CEO’s, about any matters related to ethics and integrity. She is also very well placed to answer any questions about MPI, COI or Registers of Interest.

Hayden Wright - An experienced former CEO and Town Clerk and is our Elected Member Advisor. Hayden is available to support Mayors and Councillors, for any technical matters related to the Local Government Act. He has also been sought out for his advice, in how to manage the day to day issues and challenges that arise in working with your fellow Councillors, colleagues, staff within Council, community and stakeholders.

Bob Abbot - Our Mayoral Mentor, the former Mayor of the Noosa Shire and Sunshine Coast Regional Councils. He is also a former member of the LGAQ Board and Policy Executive. Bob is available to provide broad base support for Mayors. This recognises the truly unique role that Mayors have and the role that you play in leading your Council.

As mentioned we have worked up two hypothetical scenarios to put to our Panel. One involves a Councillor Summer, the other a Councillor Winter. It is important to emphasise that these scenarios are entirely made up. Yet, to provide some context, they are modelled on some of the things that our advisors deal with on a regular basis.

**Hypothetical Scenario 1: Radical Rascal's Rugby Club**

The Radical Rascal's Rugby Club is an institution widely regarded as the premier club in town. Most of the residents, including most of Council's staff and many Councillors, are members of its very active social club. Indeed, the club house has been the venue for many weddings, milestone birthday parties and even a few funerals. This scenario involves Councillor Summer - a mad rugby player and a newly elected Councillor.

Having grown up locally, Councillor Summer was heavily involved in the club as a child. Starting as a junior and working his way up over the years, until finally becoming the Captain of a Premiership Winning Team. But that was a long time ago now. A dodgy knee and a few too many kilo's around his waist have kept him well away from the front row, where he earned his reputation as a fearless player and a dynamic leader. His passion for the club though, is as strong as ever. He has been actively involved in the club, both as a coach and on the rugby club committee. Like his father before him, he has been the President for the last five years. Both his sons are currently playing in the lower grades and his university age daughter, works behind the bar most Sunday nights.

But all was not well! The club facilities which were tired and old, required a massive refurbishment and the club is finding it increasingly difficult to keep ahead. To make matters worse, there hasn't been a premiership in over ten years. The rugby Committee believes that a refurbishment like this, is the only solution to undertake, to get the club back onto an even keel. They also want to go ahead and install twenty poker machines to help fund this.
It was on the pledge of 'I pledge to save the Radical Rascal's' platform, that Councillor Summer ran his election campaign. Indeed he believes this election victory, provides a community mandate to progress the project. This grand idea comes with several challenges.

On a financial level, it is a risky move. Like any idea of this magnitude, there is always the chance that a new building is not enough to turn around the club. Some commentators in the community are asking what would happen to the club and indeed the town, if it all went very wrong. On a community level, there was likely to be good broad based support for this initiative; but with several Councillors and indeed the Mayor on the public record, strongly opposing any further increase in pokies.

On a practical level, it is also very likely that the Council would be pressured to keep development conditions to a minimum, so as to keep the redevelopment affordable for the club. Forcing the club to bitumen its outdoor car park, will probably come at a cost that might just sink the whole redevelopment. Keeping the dusty dirt car park is likely to annoy the near neighbours, who have been vocal critics in the past and indeed the erection of some light towers, might also be opposed by local residents.

Councillor Summer himself has been active in the local newspaper and on the local radio, promoting the redevelopment ideal. At times, he has clearly breached some of the Council's own policies around media. Because of his role as Club President and obvious passion for the cause, no Councillor as yet has spoken up about these breaches.

So, that is quite an in-depth and interesting little scenario. I would like to turn now to our Panel to give us some insights.

My first question is going to be to Joan
I expect there are many Councillors here in the audience, that like the Councillor in this scenario, are actually members of clubs in their local communities. I am sure that many Councillors would also hold executive positions within those clubs. Given the circumstances of this scenario, what advice would you give to Councillor Summer?

Response:
Hon Joan Sheldon AM, Ethics Advisor, LGAQ

It is an interesting scenario, but as you know, I advise on ethics and integrity. That also involves practicality, particularly in matters of conflict of interest. Be it matters of pecuniary interest, share registry. I am also aware, that you as Councillors are providing services and also looking after your constituents, either in your division or indeed the whole Council.

I see that Cr Summer has a few issues here. The first is, that he has been President and is President of this club for the past five years. So, he definitely has a conflict of interest when it comes to representing constituents as a whole - because he is President of this club. As you know, if you are on the executive of any club, (not necessarily a member, but if you are on the executive), then you are regarded as having a conflict of interest, if in fact matters come before the Council that relate specifically to that club.

As I see it he has also got a matter of pecuniary interest, because of his university daughter (who would be dependent on him), works part time at that club. So it could well be said - he has got an indirect MPI because of this issue. Remember.... conflicts of interest in particular (not so much MPI's), can be perceived or real.
You all know being elected members, that the perception in the community is often, more of an issue for you than the real realities. It is a perception of what you are doing and delivering. So I think on those particular two points, he does have issues regarding this club, particularly of course when it comes to the Council for discussion.

Session Chair:
Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services - LGAQ

Could I throw in a hypothetical for you Joan? Let's assume that Councillor Summer is really keen to get this through. So he takes the drastic action to resign his Presidency and ask his daughter to resign. Do you think that might be sufficient, for him to stay within Chambers and have a vote?

Response:
Hon Joan Sheldon AM, Ethics Advisor, LGAQ

I think it would depend very much, whether these issues had been discussed in Council, before he made this decision, or if they were coming up to be discussed. Because the matter of personal interest (as you know), is for benefit or detriment or loss. So in fact if he is making this decision when Council is discussing these issues, or is about to discuss these issues, it could well be said that he is going to suffer detrimental loss, through his daughter. How that may be up for discussion, but remember this is a contentious issue.

However, if he decided that he really wanted to participate in these discussions when they came up (and I think he may well, because he was elected as you mentioned on a platform of this), then I would think that if he resigned his Presidency and his daughter stopped working for that club, before these issues had to be discussed in Council, then he wouldn't have any MPI.

Because he has been so vocal on the radio, it could be said 'Well, you have set yourself up here', you could have a conflict of interest. I think he would have to relate that he might have breached Council media laws, when he was so vocal on the radio, actually presenting his case.

So, that is an interesting scenario, but it remains, that you have to apply common sense at any time as to how that Council and your Councillors are going to react. Also, how the people who elected you are going to react.

Session Chair:
Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services, LGAQ

Hayden - Getting things done within Council can at times be an intricate and quite an involved sort of process. Joan has given some quite interesting context there around ethics and integrity. What would be your advice to Councillor Summer, in regards to the way that he should go about trying to get this initiative through the actual Council process?

Response:
Hayden Wright, Elected Member Advisor, LGAQ
Clearly Councillor Summer on Joan's advice (and certainly I agree with that), he has to withdraw from discussion on this matter. He does have a conflict of interest. He is clearly conflicted in the whole matter, having being President of the club and being so vocal on it. So, I suppose then he has got to work out, how he can make sure that Council gets to see and understand what the club intends and to try to ensure the club's best interests, are put before the Council in the decision making process. What he will need to do is, go back to his club and find someone else to carry that banner for him. Clearly he can't do that himself, even though he is the President.

This is a case where a Vice President, or some other member of the Committee, can step forward and do that. My advice to Councillor Summer would be clearly, he can't get involved directly in talking to Council (or Council staff directly) in a formal way, about this development. He has got to stay right out of that. He is best to go and talk to his other Committee people at his club, ask them to carry the banner forward and stay clear of it.

First of all, there is no actual conflict involved in where he is acting, particularly there is no perception of it either, because he is right away from that situation. He can certainly work hard within the club. They are two independent bodies! He is entitled to have his views at his rugby club put forward, in trying to develop what is the best case and how he thinks it will be best attractive to Council. Actually, in the putting of that forward, and actually formally taking that forward, he has got to stay right out of that.

So I think there are opportunities there for him, to work within his rugby club community, to ensure the case is put forward. But he must stay right out of that, for the reasons that Joan has enunciated.
Session Chair:
Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services, LGAQ

The Minister spoke this morning about the fact, there is going to be changes to the Local Government Act coming through. We know that there will be some changes to the way that conflict of interest, is likely to be defined within that new Act. I don't want to put you on the spot, but do you think that any of the proposed changes, would in any way change the advice that Joan or yourself have given this afternoon.

Response:
Hayden Wright, Elected Member Advisor, LGAQ

I think that the simple answer is no! The changes that are proposed in the new legislation, clarify some cases where a conflict is deemed not to occur. So it opens up the field a little more, in some of those marginal areas.

For instance: if you have got a child as a student at a school, that doesn't deem - the proposed changes to the legislation will say that that, does not constitute a conflict. So those sort of marginal things are eliminated. In a case where there is a very clear, strong conflict of interest, as there is such as this, it wouldn't make any difference at all.

Session Chair:
Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services, LGAQ

Bob, the other dimension to this scenario is obviously a political one. It seems fair to say that the community is pretty much, on the whole, supportive. Although the near residents probably don't like it that much! To my eyes it seems somewhat of a risky venture. There seems to be a few hairs on this particular one.

There is also that opposition to the pokies issue as well, which is well understood. Surely the Mayor here is in a no win situation. If he supports the club expansion, it is likely that he is going to be compromising his known stance on pokies. But, if he opposes the expansion, he would be potentially putting that club to the sword. As a Mayor, you can rarely sit on the fence.

What advice would you give, perhaps in regards to forming and articulating a position, in regards to this scenario and how best would this situation be managed do you think by the Mayor?

Response:
Bob Abbot, Mayoral Advisor, LGAQ

There are a multitude of things happening here. You talk about a political position! The reality is, the Mayor really has to get, a real outcome in this and I think the Mayor needs to come out with some integrity. The fact that he opposes poker machines in his community is important, because people know that. He needs to keep up that opposition.

The way this is presented - there is only one outcome. That is, the Committee has made a decision that there is only one way to do this and that is to make a bigger club and buy pokies. When you consider that a camel
was a horse designed by a Committee, you have got to ask yourself the question - did they come up with the right answer when they asked themselves what they needed to do? And I would suggest - No!

I think what the Mayor needs to do is go back and look through some of the stuff that has been put in front of him or her and think about, what are the real issues in that club now? They say that it has been run down, it is not making money.
• Is that because the place looks dirty?
• Is that because the management is not running it well?
• Is that because the Committee really hasn't kept its eye on the wins and losses in their financial structure?
• Is that because they are selling the wrong brand of beer?
• Is that because they are doing any of those things?

Are they the real issues that might be causing the problem with the Rascal's Rugby Club?

The statement in here states that Councillor Summer was a mad rugby player. Well, I don't know any other description of a rugby player than that! You have got to ask yourself, have those real questions been asked? Have those real questions been answered? Is there a real other opportunity to develop this club in a way, that doesn't put itself at risk and doesn't put more poker machines into that community?

It doesn't sound like a big community to me. I can guarantee you, I was taken off Club Queensland's Christmas card list a long time ago, because of my commitment to no more poker machines in my community. It is integrity that is important for the Mayor! Not just the outcome on this one thing. In four years time, the Rascal's Rugby Club might be in debt to millions and end up having to close! Well, what has that done for the Mayor's long term political future? Nothing!

But, today's headlines are tomorrow's fish and chip wrapper and the reality is the Mayor's integrity, the honesty in the way that he or she deals with this matter, is more important than anything else to them personally or politically.

• Go back a bit;
• Go back and look at what the real problems with the Rascal's Rugby Club is;
• Go back and look at what other opportunities there are to fund this expansion if it is necessary, other than poker machines;
• Go back and talk about those things that need to happen!

Don't just accept, that up front, you have a business that has failed or is failing, and the only way to fix it, is to double its size and increase poker machines. That is not the way; that is not the outcome you need and you have got to find another way of doing it. Start working on the business, not in the business. Start thinking about what are, the other opportunities for you as the Mayor and for your community, as a community that is trying to build itself, its own capacity to look after itself. What other option is there available to it, other than taking that one bit of advice from the club.

Session Chair:
Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services, LGAQ

A second issue Bob - Right at the very end of that scenario, was to do with the media. Councillor Summer as we know could have potentially disregarded some of Council's media policies. Even though none of the other Councillors have yet spoken up about those particular breaches. Do you as Mayor, not have a responsibility for keeping that behaviour in check.

Response:
Bob Abbot, Mayoral Advisor, LGAQ

A Mayor's responsibility for the behaviour of a Councillor is a bit of an oxymoron I think. The reality is - it is the Mayor's responsibility to point out to the Councillor, that there are issues here. But, I think you have got to do it in such a way that, there is an understanding about what is required.

I would be saying to Councillor Summer - I would be asking Councillor Summer, to drop into my office at some time, I want to have a talk to him about this or that. I would be saying to him, look you have got every right as President of the Association or the Club, to be making those points and I will support you to the death, because it is your right to do so.

But when you are doing that, say to the press and make sure the press are well aware, that you are doing it as the President of the rugby club!

I would be saying to Councillor Summer:

- Make sure, that they actually have that in their press release.
- That they have that in their articles.
- That they get you saying that on television, "I am saying this as President etc, etc etc".

So you can cover yourself. I would be giving that advice to Councillor Summer for Councillor Summer's own benefit, as much as for the Council's.

Hypothetical Scenario 2: Mayor Winter

Mayor Winter is a well respected and successful business lady. In the past she was a member of the local Chamber of Commerce and has been a long standing member of the local Rotary Club. Indeed, before her time on Council, she was the club treasurer.

The latest election was hard fought. Several Candidates were vying for the role and Mayor Winter had to dig deep, to fund what became a very costly and at times, bitter campaign. Mayor Winter stood on a platform of economic development, with a plan to improve employment opportunities for locals and attract more tourists to the Shire.

I would like now to introduce Jamie. Jamie was a close school friend, who followed her through school and they went onto university together. For a while they were boyfriend and girlfriend. Although their relationship was not to be, they remained firm friends.

Mayor Winter is now happily married, but Jamie is newly single, after the breakdown of his own marriage. Jamie had left the Shire for a little while, but in recent years had returned and was now the owner of a successful and well respected building company. He has also stepped up to become an active member of the Chamber of Commerce and indeed, Rotary. He and the new Mayor (his one time girlfriend), found that they now shared many of the same friends.

As the election approached, Mayor Winter knew that she was going to need to throw additional resources at her re-election bid. Several additional fund raising events were quickly put together. Following one very successful event, Jamie, who had been invited to attend at the behalf of the Mayor, offered to provide $8,000.00 towards her campaign. This is money desperately needed. Mayor Winter was very grateful, humbled and appreciative of the gesture.
In making the donation, Jamie never made any suggestion other than, he would like the opportunity to help out a dear friend. In accordance with the election rules, the donation was appropriately recorded.

As an aside, Jamie's company has for several years, been involved in completing high quality commercial developments in and around the town centre. His latest proposal is for the development of a new motel, on the site of an old community hall. It has been discussed that the new motel will also double as training facility for the local TAFE, that offers both hospitality and tourism courses.

Council had recently offered the old hall facility for sale via an auction, so as to help fund the development of the new community facility, in another part of town. Most residents were ambivalent about the decision, but a few of the old hall users have been particularly vocal about the pending demolition of their cherished building.

For Mayor Winter this arrangement seems like a perfect outcome. Selling the old hall helps to fund a new and improved community facility and the motel development likely to take its place is a great example of her delivering, on her election platform. The fact that a good friend Jamie was able to acquire the property at auction was personally pleasing to her.

But alas, the sharks are circling. Apart from the hall users, some of the unsuccessful Mayoral Candidates are actively seeking to call attention to the personal and financial ties between the Mayor and Jamie. Indeed some slanderous accusations, regarding the status of their personal relationship are starting to circulate. Jamie has rung the Mayor's office and wants to desperately meet, to talk through the development proposal and most likely the current commentary circulating in the local media and gossip.

Joan, I know you often speak about the fact that ethics is very much about perceptions. Clearly the relationship between these two is very close. Are they perhaps too close?

Response:
Hon Joan Sheldon AM, Ethics Advisor, LGAQ

Well I don't think that is the real issue. I think the real issue here is the donation that has been made. It is very clear to me, that the Mayor could not participate in any discussions in Council, that related to this application that I guess will come forth, for the motel - because she has an absolute and clear MPI (Matter of Personal Interest). As in regard to the personal relationship, that is perception and I don't think it really bears on the issue at all except, that she needs to be aware that this perception, is out there in the community. If she is seen in any way to be favouring this development, it will be said that that could be another contributing reason.

I think the real reason is the favouring, the MPI, the sort of things that Councillors have been getting into trouble for, for a long time. That is, that people make a donation to your campaign and invariably you are going to think positively about them, should a discussion come before Council. Of course that would also be on her Register of Interests and the public has access to that Register of Interests.

I suppose in a nutshell, I think that she has a clear MPI, that there is the perception, because of her proposed relationship with him (or supposed), that she could have a conflict of interest. I think that though, is of secondary importance. The real importance is the MPI.
Session Chair:
Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services, LGAQ

Let's assume that the motel actually goes and gets built. Jamie wants to recognise the support of Council and he invites the Mayor to attend. Let's assume that it is a grand opening, they are there to meet the new employed staff, meet all the TAFE students that are going to be benefiting from this new development and the Mayor is going to be presented with a gift of the finest champagne, imported especially just to recognise the opening of this new motel. Considering the history of this development, would the Mayor's attendance to that event be wise?

Response:
Hon Joan Sheldon AM, Ethics Advisor, LGAQ

Well, I think she should attend the event. She is the Mayor of the city or the town. She has, before her election supported industry, jobs and training and this is somewhere where all of those things will be provided and it will add to the economic benefit of the area. So, I think it is important as a Mayor that she attends. As you would know (Mayors sitting out there), you have a lot of asks, but you would pick the ones that you wanted. The fact that Jamie was a friend, I don't think had anything to do with it, particularly as she had taken no part, in the decision to grant the application.

In regard to the champagne, she shouldn't take that, because that looks as though this is a gift for services rendered. Even though you may say technically, she hasn't rendered the service. We are indeed talking about perception here.

But I can think of much more worthy people that could use that champagne, like possibly the people who elected them, which would get her into favourable books anyhow, by giving that away. So I think the answer is - yes go, no do not take the champagne.

Session Chair:
Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services, LGAQ

Hayden - Jamie is obviously very keen to talk and meet with the Mayor. I am sure this meeting would come under some pretty close scrutiny. What advice would you give to Councillor Winter in regards to this urgent meeting request? Jamie after all is a very close friend, can she really deny him the opportunity?

Response:
Hayden Wright, Elected Member Advisor, LGAQ

To me the answer is - I wouldn't be involved in that. I would be suggesting strongly that Councillor Winter stays right away from that. First of all, Joan has pointed out the material personal interest, which immediately says, you can't participate in the Council, in discussions, or in voting on that matter.

But it extends a little further in an ethical sense. Clearly the perception of it (as Joan has pointed out), is important as well. I think to kid yourself that any meeting with the Mayor is going to be perceived by anybody...
other than some attempt to try and explain and get the development up, I think is just kidding yourself to a large degree.

I think it is dangerous ground. It is a Council decision and I think she should resist that meeting at all costs and stay right away from it. If a meeting is required, somebody else can do it. Ask another Councillor - either the Deputy Mayor or the Chairman of the Planning Committee, or someone like that, to meet with them if it is absolutely seen as necessary. In any case I would not allow that meeting to proceed without there being officers present, to at least provide some moderation, keep some notes and to be able to give an assurance, that it is ethically and properly conducted (if a meeting indeed has to go ahead).

For Councillor Winter to be involved, I think the answer is pretty simple - stay right out of it!

Session Chair:
Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services, LGAQ

Sounds like there has been some pretty slanderous things talked about as well in the media. From your perspective, what would you think would be a trigger, in terms of any claim for defamation on behalf of Councillor Winter at all?

Response:
Hayden Wright, Elected Member Advisor, LGAQ

Defamation is one of those things I think you want to stay as far away from as you possibly can.

From my little knowledge of defamation, it is:
   a. It is expensive;
   b. Difficult to prove;
   c. Very complex, long winded and lengthy.

I don't think Councillor Winter needs that sort or a problem at all, under any circumstances. I would be strongly suggesting, she takes another path other than that. She has got to hold herself above that as a Councillor and as the Mayor. If you want to get publicity into the paper of the wrong sort, start taking defamation action. I don't think it is at all wise and I would be strongly urging her not to pursue that path.

Session Chair:
Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services, LGAQ

In a similar vain Bob - Casting the question over to you. Everything here seems technically to be above board. Jamie bought that property fairly at an auction. It was an open process. There is no evidence of any impropriety anywhere. Yet, I am sure the Mayor’s opponents are going to give this a lot of oxygen. What advice would you give the Mayor in this situation, where there is a fair bit of slander floating around the place?

Response:
Bob Abbot, Mayoral Advisor, LGAQ
Don't increase the amount of oxygen!

That is the reality of it. As I said earlier - 'Yesterday's Headlines, Tomorrow's Fish & Chip Wrapper'! That is the reality in a lot of the places. You just think yourself - you pick up the paper today, you see one of the Mayor's opponents have got beaten in the last election, now they are complaining what the Mayor is doing. What do you think, just bad blood on behalf of that person? What do you think every other person in the community is thinking, when they read that paper?

Exactly the same thing! Don't give it anymore oxygen. Don't do press releases and certainly don't go into defamation! It will end up costing you more money and heart ache, than you ever possibly believed. Stay out of all of that! The opportunity will come in the press at some time or other. Someone will say to you "What do you think about these comments Mr Mayor or Madam Mayor"? You will just say 'no, it is a just a whole lot of hooey and it is just not true'. Treat it with the contempt it deserves, but treat it with respect, on the way that you respond to it to the community that voted you in. Think about them and how they respond to you. Be honest, be open, have integrity in your response.

Definitely do not meet with Jamie! That is a given!

But I think, what we need to think about, is the people in the political environment in these days, is a little bit more preparation and we have to go back to that election time. That time when things are hot and actually think about, whether or not you are willing to take those donations from the development industry in the first place! Even if you are, whether you are willing to announce that before the election. Let's think about a bit integrity here.

Every election where I stood, I made a commitment that I would not take subscriptions, or any sort of donations from people in the development industry. Even though I still had people from the development industry wanting to support me, I said no to them. They thought I was the right person for the job and that is fine, I said no!

One guy actually slipped through in the last election. I didn't realise it, I thought he was a publican (because I had seen him in the pub a lot), but it turned out he was a developer, but I didn't know that. In that four years, that guy never once rang me, never once put any pressure on me. He just thought I was the right person for the job and was willing to offer support.

There are developers out there that are genuine. Joan talks about the perception, you have got to deal with that perception. You don't deal with it with a punch, because it is not a punch that is given to you in the first place, that you need to respond to. These things are very subtle and you have got to deal with them subtly. Don't take it on as a personal insult. Because half the people are thinking that stuff about you all the time, so if you get worried about that!

Don't give it any oxygen, don't give it any oxygen out there in the community and certainly don't give it any oxygen in your Council, because it really is a waste of time. Get on with the business of running your Council.

At the end of the day, being re-elected as the Mayor or a Councillor is merely the by-product of making good decisions. That is all it is! It is the by-product of making good decisions! That is all you need to think about.
Glen Beckett, General Manager Member Services, LGAQ

If you were the Mayor in this situation, what advice would you give the CEO in this particular development?

Response:
Bob Abbot, Mayoral Advisor, LGAQ

This particular developer! I would let the CEO know my position. I would make sure that the CEO didn't make any arrangements for me to be involved in this. I had a stated position as the Mayor of Noosa and the Mayor of the Sunshine Coast; that the CEO was well aware of. It was actually written, that I would not meet a developer under any circumstances, while an application was active.

So, it never happened. I was never put in that position, where a staff member or anyone came to me and said "this guy wants to talk to you, he has got a problem". Well, is the application active "yes", well then no! If the application was inactive and the CEO knew this, I would say 'what are the sorts of issues'. If he is complaining about too much contributions or he is complaining about the design of the road - go and talk to someone else! I have got more to do than worry about that.

Or if it is after the application has been assessed and the report is given to Council and they have got some concerns about some of the major issues, some of the conceptual or structural issues and how it meets Council's design, I will talk to them about that. But, if it is about contributions and that sort of things – you sort that out elsewhere. It is not the Mayor's job. The Mayor's job is to work on the business, not in the business. You really need to be looking at what those big picture things are and how you can deal with them. Don't get involved in that little detail, because it will burn you every time.
Keynote Speaker: “Stop f…..ing around”
Craig Harper
Author of book of the same name and
Australia’s leading motivational speaker

Due to copyright laws, the LGAQ is unable to publish this speech.

Growing the Queensland Four Pillar Economy

Bill Shields
Director
Queensland Treasury

Introduction

Session Chair

We are very happy to have as our next speaker, Bill Shields. Bill is a Non-Executive Director, on the Queensland Treasury Corporation Board and is currently Chairman of the Boards Accounts and Audit Committee. Has extensive experience in the banking and finance industry and also the provision of policy advice to Government, specialising in economics. His career responsibilities have included, economic and financial market research in Australia and overseas; Analytical and strategic advice on the Australian financial system and economic policy; Oversight of energy markets in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore.

Bill was previously Chief Economist and Executive Director of Macquarie Bank Limited and he has also held positions with the Reserve Bank of Australia, the International Monetary Fund and the Australian Treasury. He was a visiting Professor at the Macquarie Graduate School of Management and has recently taught at the Australian Catholic University of Brisbane; he is also Director of the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation.

Bill Shields
Director
Queensland Treasury Corporation

Thank you and good afternoon everybody. When I started work many, many years ago as a professional economist, I was advised, never accept speaking invitations after lunch. I think I just added, after Craig Harper to that guideline, even though I don’t speak that much publicly anymore.

By contrast with Craig, I was asked to talk about the centre topic of your conference - that is ‘Growing the Queensland Four Pillar Economy’. Economics is always a fairly dry subject, but the good news here I think is, you probably know more about the Four Pillar Economy than I do. At least in the detail and the practical issues and challenges, which probably face many of you in the regions you work in. As you see the outflow of what that Four Pillar Economy is supposed to achieve, or what it doesn’t achieve (perhaps) from time to time.

I want to speak about that, in a slightly broader economic perspective. I want to put some of the broader challenges in front of you. Some of which you would have seen recently in the press, but perhaps with a little
bit more balanced commentary, than you see regularly in the press. Finally, what I would like to do is suggest, that there is an area, where that characterisation of the strategy for Queensland, perhaps doesn't quite meet what economists normally talk about in terms of the future and we should be mindful of that particular sector of the economy. I will come back to that in due course.

I have got a few slides just to illustrate what I am going to say. I am not going to talk through these slides in any great depth, but I just want you to be aware in looking at them - basically what I am saying and how I am relating it.

You know what the Four Pillars are. The Four Pillars are Tourisms, Construction, Resources and Agriculture. In the recent State Budget it was emphasised that business investment and exports, would drive economic growth in Queensland and that Queensland’s future depended on building a strong Four Pillar Economy, based on these particular sectors. Now that appears fairly straightforward and more over, I would suggest to you, that is consistent with the general theme you have heard about in the economic debate in Australia, for the last five to six years.

Slide 1

Queensland’s ‘four pillar’ economy

- The recent State Budget emphasised that business investment and exports would drive economic growth....
- ....and that Queensland’s future depended on building a strong four pillar economy based on:
  1. Tourism
  2. Construction
  3. Resources
  4. Agriculture
- ....which in many respects reflects the more general theme of the resources boom in Australia over recent years

That debate was all about, of course, the so called resources boom. And, the resources boom I think and the way people look at it, is sometimes summed up best by cartoonists, not mining engineers or economists. This was a cartoon that appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald in January this year, labelled ‘Australia a Goldilocks Economy’. It was all about exports and mining investment related to exports, driving Australia’s Goldilocks performance, in a world that in January was being questioned very strongly by everybody, as to whether it could sustain growth.
It didn't matter if you look at the cartoon, whether the surrounding bears (which represent those major centres of the United States, Europe and Asia), it didn't matter whether they were friendly, benign or a bit aggressive, because Goldilocks had this wonderful porridge that she was able to sustain herself on. If you are able to see in the cartoon what is in her bowl, you will see that there is a mining derek there, and other paraphernalia associated with the mining and resources sector more generally.

Slide 2

Australia: a ‘Goldilocks’ economy

This was at the time, rejected as pretty much misplaced and not a way to base the future of Australia and questioned on whether it could be sustained over time. The person who wrote this article was somewhat in a minority, suggesting that this would go on for some time.

I would suggest to you that the concept of the Four Pillars in Queensland is very much a reflection of that general theme. Because the central issue in the Four Pillars, is business investment and exports driven out of business investment, most notably, in the resources sector. But not only in the resources sector!
This graph shows you a pretty good combination between the two in Queensland (this is not Australia, this is Queensland). Exports have been very positive for the Queensland economy over the last five to seven years. Investment (underneath that) by business has been increasingly stronger, driven heavily by engineering construction - which comes down to a lot of the infrastructure put in place, to support the mining expansion. Even the Capital Equipment Spending, is largely driven by mining, although 60-65% to that extent is mining related. So it looks like a fairly sound basis and it looks like one that has continued, incidentally across the period of the so called Global Financial Crisis, world uncertainty and the down turn in growth we had in the world (which was basically in 2008-2009 and a little bit in early 2010).

Slide 3
You can also see it (the Four Pillars that is) in the composition of Queensland's exports, because they are very commodity based. So the very dark blue vase at the bottom here of these compositions which compare August 2002 with August 2012, show the increasing and strong importance of coal in Queensland's export story. Almost 50% is now coal.

But Agriculture also figures strongly. What you won't see here and you don't see in a lot of the statistics that people like me deal with so easily, is the Tourism Pillar that is mentioned in the Four Pillar Strategy in Australia. That is because of the way our statistician traditionally and still currently organises figures, doesn't really focus on tourism as a sector. It is not shown as such. It is shown in a variety of other areas. Be it transport, accommodation, be it retail spending even. So, we are going to have a bit of difficulty relating to that, at least in a factual sense as we go through the talk.

Incidentally if you can't see the legends (on the slide), these are quite available to anybody who might want to utilize them or look at them more closely.
We know that this outlook in the recent period has been challenged and I don't need to tell you this and you don't need to have somebody like me tell you this. You can just pick up the paper and read it every day. Particularly in the last few months - or the last six months, where the story has been, that basically the globe is in trouble, the world economy is slowing down, particularly in the area of global production. Manufacturing production is shown on this chart in a number of indices which have collected around the world and I have shown here the US, Japan, the Euro area and China. It doesn't matter which one you look at quite frankly. Over the last year and a half they have all turned down, from that very strong recovery we had in 2010 and 2011 after the Global Financial Crisis, when (of course) everything basically stopped in its tracks for about six or nine to twelve months.

So this has been the cause of concern. It has raised the issue in many minds and in the public debate (particularly the debate you see in the press), about whether the resources boom in simple language, is over. I think it is very important before we answer that question, that we understand in a little bit more detail, what we mean when we are trying to focus our attention on growing Queensland, whether through a Four Pillar strategy or another strategy - what we mean by the resources boom and what we mean by it being over.

I look at this as an economist from two angles. I look at it from the angle of prices and there is no question that commodity prices have peaked, in most cases. As always in economic debate, people ignore the exceptions and the current ignorance would be around wheat prices for example. Or, LNG prices as compared with iron ore or coal, which captures the intention of most of the business pages headlines.

But never the less, on average and in aggregate, commodity prices have peaked and fallen (you don’t need to go any further if you want official confirmation of that), to look at yesterdays mid-year economic and fiscal outlook published by the Federal Government. In that, they forecast that in this year and the year ahead after
that, we will see a 10% decline in what is called the Terms of Trade, on the back of what has already occurred. That is just the ratio of export to import prices. But it is really driven by the downturn in export prices continuing on the back of what you have already read about in the press, across the spectrum of Australia's exports.

On the other hand, when we talk about production, we get into the realm of what economists like to discuss more in terms of demand. This is what people want of what we produce. The products we are able to produce and export successfully. Then we get down to the area of volumes. If we distinguish between prices and volumes, I would like to leave you with the thought, that when you hear the debate and you look at the evening news, or you read the papers about the resources boom being over, draw a distinction between these two areas.

The consequences of the price side are pretty clear (again, if you go back to yesterday's mid-year economic and fiscal outlook) you will see that tax receipts are forecast to decline sharply. The Government has had to make more spending cuts to get its balanced Budget target for the year ahead, because corporate profitability is going to suffer as prices fall. But, nowhere in that outlook was it suggested, that the volume of exports would decline. That is driven by a different aspect. That is driven by the demand out of production in the world. What we really want to focus on going forward for Queensland I think, is not so much the profitability issue (although it is important), but we want to focus on the demand issue and the volume particularly of exports.

I would like to spend a little bit of time talking about that. But before I do, I mentioned that tourism is one of the areas that you don't easily see in aggregate economic data. I took this chart out of the recent Budget Statement in Queensland (some of you may have already seen it). This draws in another aspect of the so called resources boom, which is very price related. That is of course the exchange rate. We all know for those who are home grown economists and of course everybody is even though they deny it - that prices affect demand to some extent. It certainly affects what you and I purchase (at least to some extent) and it affects what people are able to competitively sell to others in business (at least to a certain extent). The quality of product etc, etc, are also important.
This reflects the ‘Exchange Rate Effect’ out of the resources boom. There has been a lot of angst expressed in the press recently, because although commodity prices have come down sharply, of course the exchange rate hasn’t. It still continues to sit somewhere above one US dollar. Most forecasts suggest it will sit there for the next couple of years.

The second thing I learnt when I started work as a professional economist, is always avoid forecasting the exchange rate. There is absolutely no upside in it what so ever! I once had a very good corporate client who forced us at the Board lunch, to write down our forecast on a piece of paper and they catalogued it. Luckily it was the one time in my life I think I got it right. Never the less, you don't want to be forecasting the exchange rate. It is made up of too many influences, it is too uncertain. But, I think the likely hood at the moment, is it is going to remain where it is if we have to put it in that terms.
When we look at this chart, I would challenge you to suggest that the exchange rate is the obvious cause, of a tourism problem in Queensland. This breaks down international visitor arrivals and interstate visitor arrivals. Really, despite all the talk about global gloom (the high exchange rate), people from overseas have continued to come. Now certainly the rate of increase has slowed down. Nothing stays static in this world. But what has really declined, is those coming from interstate.

This could still be an exchange rate effect of course, but it comes back to the demand side. What it suggests is those people “down south”, for whatever reason (but, price may be very important), have found a cheaper alternative overseas than travelling to Queensland. This for a business I think makes an extremely challenging outlook.

It may not be that our product is wrong; it may not be that we are unable to control our costs; it may not even be that our prices are wrong. The international people after all have to buy Australian dollars to come here, at a, for them, weaker exchange rate for their own currency. But, down south they have the same currency, so the exchange rate is not an issue. But it is more attractive for them of course to go overseas somewhere, because this looks to this side of the equation, much cheaper.

That is not an easy thing to deal with. How do you restructure your product and service? The exchange rate is an issue, but is not the biggest issue. That is all I am trying to suggest. There are many lessons you can draw out of this and it is not necessarily a big issue in selling a product to overseas clients, if the other elements of what you are offering are right.
What is really important, I would suggest to you apart from prices and profitability, is what is happening overseas in terms of that earlier chart of production and global growth. Here I think the recent debate has to some extent, been a little bit biased (at least in the press). The idea that the resources boom and therefore the Four Pillars, which reflect that by and large in Queensland, may be over or have peaked and are going to turn down, is now (I think), a little bit misplaced if we look at the global outlook.

This is a dangerous area for anybody to get into, but anybody can have an opinion here - you don't have to be an economist and you hear it every night on the news. This is one take on the world, which I use regularly in this sort of situation or in my teaching, because it is a fairly credible global source of the outlook for economic growth. It is based on the IMF's latest economic outlook, which was released in fact, just a few days ago. What I have put in the centre column (which is 2012) are arrows showing the change from their previous forecast of six months ago. There is no question that by and large, all of those are down.

I have cheated a bit here because I should have a down arrow on Japan, but quite frankly, it was down from 2.2 to 2.3, which is not worth arguing about. This is statistically insignificant, so I think it is the same forecast essentially.

What I would draw your attention to, despite all those figures are by and large down from previous forecasts, some of them (particularly in the Asian countries around us, who are big clients of Queensland, for Queensland exports) is actually a better outcome than they had last year. So growth will be stronger there. You have got to look at the detail, not the aggregates.

The second and most important issue I would like to draw attention to is, 2013 and in this case, all the figures by and large are stronger, including in the much discussed and debated Euro area. Now whether right or wrong, time will tell. All forecasts have a habit of not being correct of course, at least precisely. But the trend is clear, the trend particularly in the Asian economies, which form an extremely strong market for Queensland's resource and agricultural exports. This area of the world in Asian, is going to have what economists loosely call when they don't want to get too technical, a ‘soft landing’. In other words, growth is going to slow from what we might have seen a couple of years ago, but not dramatically so.

So, for the Asian countries, they are still growing faster. For the newly industrialising countries of Asia (very important in that coal and resource dimension - these are the Korea, Taiwan's of this world) they are growing a bit faster, or at a similar rate to two years ago. In the case of China, which is much discussed in the press, they are going to grow at around about 8% for the next two years.

I would like to leave you with a thought here! All the discussion about China's slowing growth from what we had a year or so ago, when it was 9 and then at one stage, plus 10%, really misses the point. The point is that that was too fast (and the Chinese authorities admit it was too fast), it might have been great if you were selling them stuff. But the problem internally, is they had all those things in Australia we tended to forget from the past. Inflations, speculative asset markets, nightmares for controlling how the economy was managed month to month, quarter to quarter, year to year!

This is a desired slow down. Complicated by what has happened with the Global Financial Crisis and the world around them, the Chinese want to grow more slowly, so they can grow more sustainably. They see that sustainable area of growth as 7-8%. That essentially is in no uncertain terms a good outcome, for economies like Queensland (Australia more broadly), if we are focussed on export orientation, industrialisation and where the demand particularly for resources, processed food stuffs and raw food stuffs that go into that processing, are likely to come from.
The industrial countries - a bit of a mixed bag! We do export to them obviously. The US doesn't look too bad, it is sort of muddling through - not great, and you hear a lot of to-ing and fro-ing in the press. But it looks like it will continue to grow about 2%. In fact this year it is going to grow faster than they thought six months ago. Next year about the same and as I said, touch wood, Europe might actually recover from a pretty disastrous year this year.

So it is not about outlook, it is in fact what we call a Soft landing. This is reflected incidentally (if you like to look at other forecasters), in something that appeared in the press a week or so ago, the latest set of forecasts from Australia's Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, whose latest forecast suggests that not only will some prices (like wheat and LNG I mentioned), rise in the year ahead because of the circumstances in their markets - But demand will continue to be positive across resources and agriculture.

Now if you look at those ABF forecasts, one thing stands out. It is a very voluminous thing and wades through tables and a lot of esoteric stuff that economists get into, but the word that keeps recurring throughout, is Asia. Asia is seen as the source of that global dynamism and growth. That is where many of the exports from Queensland go and that will be positive and supportive of the Four Pillars.

Never the less this challenges. These forecasts may not be right. The other point I would like to make - I mentioned before, there is often something that is missed in this debate, that is that Queensland in fact, I think the Four Pillars can mislead us sometimes. Queensland is in fact a quite diverse economy.

Queensland: a diverse economy

This is a chart we often use in Queensland Treasury Corporation with overseas clients, who buy bonds for us that are used to fund investments in Local Council areas, in Government Enterprises and the Government as a whole. I have highlighted the Four Pillars to the extent that they are recognised in the statistics. We don't
have tourism because it appears elsewhere and this is a share of State Product as it is called. You can see
the orange bars are significant (reference to slide), but not the total. Far from it! There are many other sectors
in this economy that contribute to growth over time and are important. Manufacturing, transport and
communications, finance and of course even when you get down the bottom, the public sector and a whole
mish mash of things called other. This can include dwellings, professional, scientific, technical services,
accommodation and food. This is very much, if you look at those figures and add them up, even like the rest
of Australia, by and large a service economy (Perhaps the only non-service economy maybe Western
Australia, debatably).

So the Four Pillars are important, particularly if we could take out tourism. But they are not the end of the
story. The other areas are of significant parts of growth.

**Contributions to growth**

Now this is an industry breakup. Economists (and here I apologies for getting a bit economically technical),
talk about growth in another way and that's something I have mentioned already - *Demand*. I think the Four
Pillars have a little problem here in presentation, for those of us in the community interpreting what is meant
by it, in missing a point. The point is, if you look on the normal Statisticians breakup of contributions to Gross
State Product (you see those sorts of sectors shown on this chart), they are demand driven. You see household
consumption, you see dwelling investment (but it has been a very miserable three years for
dwelling investment - housing), you see business investment are the resources boom! You see Public Final
Demand (and you can see that is becoming negative, not surprisingly, given budget priorities). You see
exports, you see imports and then you see the so called Gross State Product.
The overall outlook is pretty good. If you believe the forecasts, we will grow by 4% in Queensland this year and only 3.75% next year. But pretty good by Australian standards! The Treasurer yesterday confirmed average 3% growth for Australia as a whole.

The thing I would like to draw your attention to but, is in that context of the resources boom ending, you can see it in these forecasts which are taken from the Budget. I have got 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 on the chart. I would like to say the end of the resources boom might be better seen as, the end of the first stage. In the first stage, massive investment to develop new resources, clearly lead to some exports. But was matched in fact by negatives for imports of all the capital equipment required to put that in place!

Consumer Sentiment

As business investment comes down because the new facilities are in place - be it a mine, a production facility, an LNG facility - the exports pick up as they start to produce an export. If global demand is there of course! That is the big if here. A volume issue, not necessarily for the moment, a price issue. At the same time we get a benefit for growth, because the negative bars associated with imports go away. Because, we don't have to import the equipment anymore! We will have spares, replacement equipment and we may have some new developments. So you get a re-balancing of growth towards an export driven economy in the pure sense, as distinct from a business investment driven economy, as you develop the resources and facilities to export.

That sounds like a fairly straight forward story. It is highlighted by the way economists often talk about contributions to growth, of the external sector of the economy in terms of net exports. If you looked at the figures behind these bars (reference to slide), the contribution to growth of net exports (that is exports minus imports) will shift from -1.6 percentage point in this year, to plus 1 percentage point in the year ahead. That is the sign of the first stage of the resources boom ending. If the forecast comes true, a sign of the next stage taking hold. – A positive contribution from the external sector, net of what has to be imported to sustain it.
But the real issue I want to draw attention to in the last few minutes is the left hand bars (reference to slide). The Four Pillars don't mention you and I! They don't mention household consumption! I like to tell my students, (which is a pretty trite thing, but it is true), that in all the industrial economies of the world - be it they small, medium size like Australia, big like the United States - the household sector contributes over two thirds to economic growth in any year. The household sector cannot be ignored if you want sustained, positive growth. As you can see here, all those bars are fairly modest compared to the more dramatic bars associated with business investment and exports. But you and I and aggregate are very important!

We are important in two respects, because as households we consume (or spend) and we also invest. Now we are not doing much investment at the moment in dwellings. But there are some positive signs which I will mention a bit later, coming through in Queensland. Household consumption before the GFC in Queensland and all the focus on the resources boom, contributed almost 60% of growth in the state. Herein lies a bit of the issue for the future I think and a major question mark. What can we rely on for the future? Not necessarily from those four industry based pillars, but from the household sector, which traditionally is such a large part of the economy. Here the evidence is a bit mixed!

First of all, a householder consumer sentiment (or confidence in simple language, here shown in the blue line) in Queensland, seems to have steadied. The really good news, is the orange line which shows the sub-question (if you like in the index), of whether it is a good time to purchase a dwelling, has steadily increased for the last two years. At this stage there is some sign that people may be moving to buy houses again. It is still lagging, but their confidence and their sentiment around purchasing houses has certainly improved. And, I would argue that will continue to improve, as we see further reductions in official interest rates and probably (although not 100%), similar reductions in standard variable mortgage rates across the country. That is a positive in the outlook, although starting from a very weak base, admittedly.

On the negative side - there are negative influences – is employment. Employment is a large source of the growth in household spending over time. So you and I sit around the kitchen table, or discuss things with our partner and sometimes our children if we are game, about what we should spend our household budget on and how much we have got to spend this year compared to last. But, in aggregate it tends not to be so much around that discussion, which is based on how much I earn, but the growth in consumption is based on more how employment grows over time.
Employment in Queensland has had a bit of a mixed field over the last year or so. On the left hand side (reference to slide), things like manufacturing, agriculture and even construction, have all seen employment decline. On the right hand side (reference to slide), you see things like health, professional services, education (something I am involved in), where households have seen their employment grow. But of course we know from a lot of the fiscal discussion around us that might be under some threat at the moment.

So this is a question mark! Not just because of State Budgets, whether here in Queensland or in New South Wales where I live, or in other states. But also because of what is happening in the restructuring of industry and the abilities of households, ultimately to afford what services are offered in these sectors. As it was mentioned in the introduction, I happen to be on the Board of the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation, we have 11,500 students, 17 independent affordable fee schools, about 800 staff and ever since the GFC and before it, we have seen our aggregate enrolments across the schooling system, grow. Year in, year out! Despite the rhetoric, despite what budgets we set, we have seen enrolments in aggregate grow.

I argue that is because like (here - us) sit around the kitchen table, we have made a priority in our spending (education) and are more and more devoting spending to that. That will drive employment in our case of teachers. So there are positives and negatives, but in aggregate the employment situation is a bit of an issue. The left had bars may... may not get any better if the resources boom and business investment, as we discussed, turns down.
But there is a positive and this is what I would like to finish on and a very important positive I think. My own view, for what it is worth is that a lot of the problems after the GFC, with household spending, which is clearly shown in the decline in household spending in Queensland - has a contribution to State Growth. That is because our perception as households, of our wealth declined. Perception in both our actual wealth (because one line here shows the stock market) and the other shows, most importantly, our house prices.

Now it is not a perfect measure of household wealth in either case, nor in combination. But it is a good perception (I would argue) of what many households see, as their personal financial wealth or situation. And, they both took a very big hit in 2008-09. They have recovered patchily in the case of housing. At first it recovered strongly; then fell back strongly. But the recent price starter has been quite positive. In particular in Queensland I might add, if you look at the new daily price series.

The orange line in the stock market (well, you know the story, you don't need me to tell you), it is recovering as well and superannuation funds have started to show that, if that is what you look at for a measure of your wealth. So household wealth and the perception of wealth, is starting to improve and that is a positive.

So we have got positives and we have got some negatives for this very important sector of the economy, which is not really captured in the Four Pillars as such, but is a critical issue I would argue, to how strongly Queensland can grow in the future. On the Four Pillars itself, I would say in the external sector, it is not quite as bad as you often see in the rhetoric and the press. But then in my experience, nothing usually is.

Thank you very much!

Session Chair
Well said Bill and I think to have such a balanced perspective from someone who is one of the very significant, well recognised, macro economists (certainly from the market perspective in Australia over the last twenty years) has been terrific.

**Local Government Amendment Act discussions**

**Chair: Greg Hoffman PSM**
**General Manager, Advocate Stream, LGAQ**

**Panel**

**Hon David Crisafulli MP**
**Minister for Local Government**

**Stephen Johnston**
**Acting Director-General**
**Department of Local Government**

**Tim Fynes-Clinton**
**Managing Director**
**King & Company**

**Greg Hoffman - GM Advocate Stream, LGAQ**

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to our session. The purpose of today's Panel Session is to provide you with an opportunity to input to the development of the new Local Government Act. The Act which is central to the structure, framework and operation of Local Government and importantly to your roles as Mayors, Councillors, CEO’s and Council Officers!

The Local Government and other legislation amendment bill 2012, was introduced into the Parliament, on the 13 September and is out for consultation until it is debated in November. All of you here today, delegates and observers are invited to participate in this session. We want to hear from you and importantly, the Minister wants to hear from you.

Joining me for the Panel session is:

- The Honourable David Crisafulli MP. David is the Minister for Local Government.
- Steve Johnston who is the Acting Director-General of the Department of Local Government
- Tim Fynes-Clinton. Tim is the Managing Partner of King and Company Solicitors and LGAQ's chief legal advisor.

Please join me in welcoming our panel to the stage. The format for the Session involves the Minister and myself giving only short opening remarks on the Bill, to ensure maximum time and opportunity is available for your comments and your questions, to the Panel.
Chair: Greg Hoffman PSM, General Manager, Advocate Stream, LGAQ

The LGAQ has welcomed the introduction of the Local Government and other legislation Amendment Bill. Prior to the State Election in March this year, the Association was active in its advocacy, to all parties on reforms it sought to the Local Government Bill and other legislation impacting on Councils! In particular the Association developed a Policy Position on the empowerment of Local Government and central to this Policy was the removal of legislative constraints and compliance, and reporting requirements that had increasingly been imposed in the 1993 Act and particularly in the 2009 Local Government Act.

The LNP’s ‘Empowering Local Government’ policy released at the time of the election was warmly welcomed by Councils, as it addressed many of those identified concerns. Subsequently the Associations briefing note to the Minister, details specific changes that we source in the Act. We have congratulated the Minister and the Department, on the extensive consultation with the Association in the drafting of the Bill and the lengthy period provided for further consultation with Councils and other stakeholders, prior to the debate on the Bill in November.

Today’s panel session is part of that consultation. The Association has made a submission and appeared before the Transport Housing and Local Government Parliamentary Committee, on the 8th October. In that submission we identified our support for the significant changes that were proposed in the Bill as is follows (we have given a green light to):

- The reinstating of the body corporate status;
- The simplifying, conflicts of interest provisions;
- Introduction of joint Local Governments;
- Removing prohibitions on Councillors standing for state elections;
- Simplifying reporting and assessment of allegations of inappropriate behaviour;
- Empowering Mayors and Councillors with greater authority, to establish the operational frameworks of their Councils;
- Empowering Mayors to direct Senior Executive Officers and prepare and present Budgets.

However there are some amber lights in the position that we put to Government:

- We seek some clarification or action in securing Queensland Councils within the State Industrial Relations system. A possible concern arising out of the reincorporation of Local Governments.
- Clarifying the CEO’s obligations to provide information to Councillors.
- Improving the terminology, clarity and certainty about adopting local laws.
- Clarifying costs recovery fees for Councils in giving permits, licences and registrations.
- Clarifying the long term Asset Management Plans and Financial Plans are indeed ten year plans, not aligned with Corporate Plan at five years.
- Ensuring the Acts and regulations are consistent about the application of Councillors Discretionary Funds.
- Ensuring Councils can access information about the whole area, not just their Division, where Divisions are in place.
- The removing some contradictory MPI provisions that may be misinterpreted and lead to unintended non-compliance.
- Providing Councils with choice, to appoint Senior Executive Officers, either by the proposed Panel Model that is in the Bill or the existing model where the CEO makes those choices.
LGAQ's submission is now on the Parliamentary Committee's website and has been sent to all Council's via LG Online.

I will now invite the Minister for his opening remarks and then we will get to questions and answers from the floor.

Hon David Crisafulli MP
Minister for Local Government

Thanks very much Greg. Ladies and Gentlemen, I thought based on the time, that rather than me go through all the wonderful things that we are all in agreement about, that we in fact dedicate the time to actually working through the things that you do want to change. So, I will accept the praise from Greg and thank each and every one of you for the time that you gave. I can say in all sincerity that in each of the 73 visits, there is not one time that I didn't walk away with something. There was always some little gem that came up, which is why I think the changes to the Act are going to be so powerful.

When we then drafted, we gave LGAQ an opportunity to have a look at it, as well as LGMA. I make the commitment to you today (and it is a sincere one) and that is that during the Committee process we are happy to take on board each and every suggestion, whether they come from individual Councils or the LGAQ. There are some that I agree with - there are some that I disagree with. But, I am very happy to make any change that is in the interest of the State as a whole. As I said this morning, if further change needs to be made, lets bring it on! Whether that has to be early next year for another round, or mid way through the year, the commitment is there to continue this as an evolving beast.

I will hand back to you Greg so we can get this on the road, so we can get to the nuts and bolts and I thank everyone again for their interest.

Greg Hoffman
General Manager, Advocate Stream, LGAQ

Thank you Minister. Now it is your chance to probe the issues, particularly those issues that you might have some concerns about. We have got microphones. Please provide your name, where you are from and importantly, keep your comment or question concise so we can fit as many in for the next twenty minutes.

Comment/Question:
Steve Wilton, Chief Executive Officer, Cook Shire Council

Just some concerns about the budget provisions for the Mayor and the timeframes, the 31st August I think was the cut off time to have the Budget adopted and he has to have a copy of the proposed Budget to the Councillors two weeks before that. Given that now it is September as the latest time you can have the Budget - that puts a bit of onus on the Mayor given that it is new.

Response:
Panel Member
I guess that is directed to me Greg. I think this year was a real anomaly, in the fact that our level of Government had what it had done to it by virtue of the fact that the election date changed. Yet, the vast majority of Councils still delivered pretty close to the end of July. I would just like to have some sort of definitive timeline. I think it is in the interests that we do develop Budgets. Otherwise what happens is, we then get stuck in either wet seasons or Christmas periods and things get carried over. In the same way that our Budget was delayed this year, I think that you got a pretty firm commitment from the Government that that is not going to happen to us in future. It is something I did bounce through the LGAQ. Again, if there is a strong push forward I would love to hear about it.

But, it has given me the opportunity to talk about the role of the Mayor in developing the Budget and the role of the Council.

First of all I say to the Councillors in the room - nothing will change for you, other than a guarantee that you will be given at least two weeks to have a look at the Budget. Now.... that provision doesn't exist. So at the moment, technically you could turn up and on the morning of the Budget, be presented your first look at that document. I know, because it happened to me once. So that is the reality. If you are in a political Council and it works and you are on the outer, that can be done. So I say to you as Councillors for the first time, you will be given at least a two week window.

On the Mayor tabling the Budget - I don't know a single Mayor who will not use the CEO and all of the staff and indeed (a good Mayor) will use all of his or her Councillors to prepare that Budget. But what we say, by the changes to the Act, is the Mayor is clearly in charge of the Council, the Mayor is clearly the First Citizen and deserves the right to be able to shape that budget.

If you are asking how I would do that as the Mayor - I would sit down with my CEO and I would say 'look, this is what our focus to be this year, we want to have a real focus on roads, we are prepared to take a bit of a haircut in this area, we want to keep rates somewhere around this window, go forth and let's make it work'. But there are no in-betweens. It is either the CEO prepares the Budget, or the Mayor prepares the Budget. I think that right should rest with the person who is elected popularly by the people.

Comment/Question:
Cr Lisa Bradley, Logan City Council

I am just a bit concerned (it has been expressed by a number of Councillors within Logan) that we weren't really given enough time to put in a submission for the changes. We were given three weeks and our Council hadn't actually met in that time, to actually put in a submission. So I just want to hear what you want to say about that.

Response:
Panel Member

Put in a submission. The Bill doesn't go before Parliament until November. I think yours was the seventh Council I visited early on, but I am happy to come back and talk again if you want to sit down. I am happy to make that offer in the next two weeks if need be.

Session Chair: Minister, can you just clarify whilst the Parliamentary Committee process has closed, there is no bar on Councils making submissions directly to you.
Response:
Hon David Crisafulli MP

Absolutely!

Comment/Question:
Cr Paul Tully, Ipswich City Council

Thanks for the Draft Bill. I think it encompasses many of the issues that Ipswich mentioned to you when you came and it is certainly a breath of fresh air. I have two issues.

One is about the Budget. One of my submissions to the Committee is that, the draft be amended to enable Councils to set their own arrangements, still recognising the fact that the Mayor would present the Budget. We are a Council that meets from about February onwards (usually about every week or two) for the preparation of the Budget, leading up to a couple of month. We would like that embedded in the new Legislation so that, each Council does have the discretion, or to make it clear they have got the discretion to set their own arrangements, but still consistent with the thrust of what you have said. That is number one.

Number two is the issue about the right of inspection, which is something that has been entrenched in the Local Government Act for a long time. Out of left field has come this provision, that in divided Councils, the Councillors would only have the right to inspect documents in respect of their own Divisions. I note that the Ombudsman has made a submission to the Parliamentary Committee, saying that that is not fair, or not right.

It surprises me, that in an undivided Council, a Councillor would have the right to inspect any document across the whole Shire or Region. But in Divided Councils such as the Gold Coast, Ipswich, or others - that it would be restricted! The Councillors would only be able to inspect Divisions. When I take an oath of Office, I am elected primarily (the Act says this), to represent the whole city, not just the residents of my Division.

Response:
Hon David Crisafulli MP

Excellent point Paul! I will take your first one on notice.

On the second matter, I think you can put that down to drafting error. What my intention of the changes were as follows:

In the case of where it is a Divided Council, a Councillor should be given an entitlement to every piece of information that he or she requires, from right across the Council. What we want the change to reflect - is that where it is a Divided Council, that person should not be able to have the resources of a dedicated officer, to sit down with them and baby sit them for as many hours as they like, while they go on a fishing expedition across other divisions.

So that is the only change that I wanted to see embedded there. Your access to information - absolutely no dramas! The issue that we had, was when somebody who is a Divisional Councillor is sitting down with a dedicated staff member and bagging them down for hours upon hours, on what really could be accused of being a fishing expedition. Again, like I said, the way the current changes are worded, do not reflect that
adequately and that has to be rectified as part of that process. But if you think that doesn't go far enough, we would be interested to hear it. But I think that is a pretty good balance.

Comment/Question:
Cr John Wharton, Mayor, Richmond Shire Council

One of the biggest problems we have got (and I am not sure how much of the Act you could change, or whether sections of it are even relevant), is the cost of doing business. There is so much red tape and it is costing so much to do business. We have got State Government stripped 37% of our TIDS funding away (not sure if you are aware of that, but we will let you know). It is really going to have a major effect on us and we really need to cut out the cost of business.

A lot of our poor Council's, it was identified yesterday that the biggest Councils are the ones with the most inefficiency. It is because, everything is just added on and added on and we really would like to see a lot more red tape cut, a lot more common sense given to, particularly our construction jobs. They are the ones that are really breaking us down. It is happening right across Australia. We are becoming completely uncompetitive with the rest of the world. So if there is any way you can do that, it would be really good David.

Response:
Hon David Crisafulli MP

John, first of all on TIDS - I don't have to preach to you. You know our situation as a Government and you know the decisions we are making. That said, I still see the most efficient way to deliver road infrastructure in regional Queensland, is through Local Government. I remain convinced of that and I am pretty confident the Premier shares that view. I think you will find that reflected in the years to come when the purse strings are opened a bit.

John, on the issue of red tape - we agree with you. The little bit I control, which is the Local Government Act, I hope you see in good faith what we are doing there - forcing you to do Community Plans and reporting back to us each year.

Whilst that might not sound huge on the surface, I know in the case of some of those rural Councils, they spent $40,000.00 on it, in a budget where rates income is less than $600,000.00. That is a fair whack. I think the Gold Coast spend a shade over one million, developing their Community Plan. So, it is real money. The things that I control, I have done something about it by saying, “you reconcile it with your own public rather than coming back to me”.

There is a broader push in Government (I might ask Steve to talk very briefly about the view as a collective), but I think there are huge opportunities, right down to the way that we manage risk. The classic example that I see every day is on traffic control. That is the one that drives me most berserk. I think we are too averse to risk and as a result we are all paying dearly.

Response:
Stephen Johnston, Acting Director-General, Department of Local Government

With the new Department of Local Government, we have got about 40% of our staff based in the regions. About 60% based in Brisbane. What we are looking for our regional staff to do more so (they have done a
little bit in the past), but particularly now with the opportunity with a new Government, is for them to take on what I call a solution brokering role.

Where Councils are finding they are having problems, or snags, or impediments with other Government Departments (I had an example recently with a Council not far from where I used to live - where they were told that a simple road opening permit was going to take seven months. It was a one paragraph response from that Government Department). Now, that is the sort of thing that we believe as the Department of Local Government, we have a role in trying to find a way forward. A simple road opening permit should not take seven months. Plus, there was no explanation!

Now, as the Department, I guess, our immediate sympathy/empathy is going to be with the Council. Where you are finding those sort of road blocks, please being them to the attention of your regional staff. If that doesn't work, bring them to the attention of myself in Head Office and we will undertake (the Minister and myself if it needs to go that high), we will undertake to try and at lease get you a reasonable explanation, if not a solution to that problem. I appreciate what you are saying about the red tape. Part of what we are doing as a Department is trying to find a solution for Councils, particularly when it is the State who might be causing the problem.

Session Chair

I think too Minister, with the work that is being done on the regulations at the moment to the Act, we are going to see a further removal, of a lot of process that adds time and cost to doing business. That might be another bonus to the issue raised by John.

Comment/Question:
Cr Belinda Murphy, Mayor, McKinlay Shire Council

This is a question for the Minister in relation to empowering the Mayors to be able to direct senior staff. Just I suppose, some concern around that (very limited time as a new Mayor, but I was a Senior Executive for around six years), so I suppose, I have some concerns in how you manage that so you are not blurring the lines for operational staff in relating that to the Mayor and the CEO.

Response:
Hon David Crisafulli MP

Thanks Madam Mayor. Like any good relationship there will need to be boundaries and guidelines. Clearly a Mayor cannot direct somebody to do something that is contrary to the Budget, for example. We do believe that the Mayor is the First Citizen of the community and we do believe that the Mayor should have that ability to be able to direct senior staff and play a role in the appointment of the senior staff.

I am not expecting you to run around and tell people how to fill pot holes and where to prune branches. But the Mayor needs to have the ability, to have the respect of the organisation, that they can go and direct senior staff. I would be very surprised, if a senior staff member didn't keep the lines of communication open with the CEO and clearly show the CEO what they have done on behalf of the Mayor. But I think that power should exist because, I have heard time and again, where people say, I feel powerless. I have put my hand up to do
a job and I just don't feel as though I can get things done. Well, this is the one way of clearing a way through the red tape.

Comment/Question:
Cr Brian Battersby OAM, Moreton Bay Regional Council

This is question is to you Minister and it is probably part to do with your colleague (Minister McArdle) - it is a water matter.

You may be aware in Moreton Bay Regional Council's case, right in South East Queensland, we were one of the first Councils to heavily subsidise the increases in the charges of water. When the water charges went up, our Council decided to increase them by 50% the first year, 25% the second year and then we were to phase it out. The Legislation through the previous Government stymied us and we have been kept at the 50%.

So our Council now, I think it is in the vicinity of $70 million, we have spent in over three years in subsidising water and it is having a significant, painful, impact on our Budget. I think we have made representations to yourself and the Water Minister and I was just wondering if you can throw any light on it? Because, at a time soon we will be in deliberations for the Budget and this is a very significant matter for us. It is an operational cost!

Response:
Hon David Crisafulli MP

I have no doubt Brian and I do express a sympathy, you have made a tough decision and I can understand what your frustrations been. I hate to sound like a wishy washy politician, but it isn't my area of responsibility. We do have a Water Minister and that is his role. I am there to help you fight the fight by all means, but it is not under my jurisdiction. So I really can't give you any joy or hope.

Comment/Question:
Greg Hoffman PSM, General Manager, Advocate Stream, LGAQ

Minister if I may ask a question? It is in relation to the final point we have identified in our Amber Light - Namely, Councils having a choice, of how they go about the appointment of that Senior Executive staff. The Bill at the moment has it, that there is a Panel and that is the method used. Some Council's have said to us, they would like a choice to retain the current arrangement, where the CEO makes those appointments as is currently the case. What is your response to having a 'choice of approach', as Councils in different circumstances, size and locations, might think appropriate?

Response:
Hon David Crisafulli MP

Thanks very much Greg. To be brutally honest, I really don't favour it and I will explain why. This solution came from my visit to a mid-sized Council (I personally thank the Mayor for it, I think it is a good solution), rather than having the whole Council. It clearly gives input from the CEO, who ultimately will be the person responsible for issuing discipline and working with that senior contract employee. But it also allows the
elected officials to have a greater say, in the people who they put on and therefore those senior staff, understanding that their master is not just the CEO, but indeed the popularly elected Mayors and Councillors. The reason why I struggle with the concept of having two models is, there is a simple way to have choice. That is, if you don't want to be part of the process, you say to your CEO 'come to us with a recommendation and I will just back your decision'.

I want the Mayor and the Councillor (either the Deputy Mayor or the Committee Chairman), to have to delegate that responsibility each and every time and think about it each and every time. Because I say to all of you, to the Mayors and Councillors, I would hasten to think every one of you at some stage or another has had somebody have a gripe to you, about something in the organisation and I want you to know that the senior staff understand, that you are not just a figurehead. That you are more than that!

It doesn't matter whether it is a Category 1 Council, or the largest Local Government in the nation. I want you to know, that you are more than just a pretty face who puts your hand up every four years, gets belted and has cartoons in the paper about you. So if you feel that you don't want that responsibility, every time there is a senior appointment, just tell the CEO to come to you with a recommendation. But, I want you to give that right away and not to have to sign it off in a manner like that.

Comment/Question:
Cr Wendy Bolgary, Redland City Council

I had a couple of issues, but my main one is there wasn’t enough detail. In five years in Council that is one thing that I have learnt - that the devil is in that detail. So it was hard for me actually…… things I disagreed with, perhaps if there had been more of that detail. You have said yourself, when Paul from Ipswich said something, you actually didn’t mean that to happen with the change.

The Budget one is a concern to me. I don’t believe in Politics at our level, but I think if the Mayor does have the right to exclude some councillors from the Budget deliberations, we could end up like Brisbane and have that division. I do believe that decision was based on the way that Brisbane did their Budgets. I think all Councillors are elected to represent that community and we should all have that right. The Mayor should definitely give it to everybody before two weeks, (which apparently some didn’t), but all Councillors should have the ability to be involved in the decision making.

Any Directive that the Mayor gives to the CEO, now, doesn’t have to be recorded. Again, I could be wrong on this, but I think if the Mayor, for the CEO’s sake, is given a Directive, that it should be itemised/listed somewhere for freedom of information.

Another one was the law making process. Even though the local paper is apparently decreasing with reading and everything - a lot of oldies still rely on that and they don’t get on the internet. So when we do have a law change, I do believe for accountability and accessibility, for a lot of our community, we do need to still have it put into the newspaper.

The other one was this matter of Ordinary Business with the Planning Scheme. Previously with a Planning Scheme we didn’t have to say, a matter of personal interest. But now we don’t have to even if it is just an amendment. I believe it should actually be opened up the other way. Not made it easier, but we should be more accountable and transparent. Even with a major Planning Scheme, if we are related, or have a connection to anybody and they are getting a greater yield over a property, somehow we should declare that. Whereas this way it is actually opening it up more the other way.
Response:
Hon David Crisafulli MP

Thanks Wendy, I will address all four of those and I will try to do so as quickly as possible.

The first one is on the Budget. You really are misinterpreting what I am saying. The two weeks, actually for the first time, gives you a safety net that has never existed before. So you are getting something that you do not currently get, you do not have at the moment. First time! So it is a protection.

Councillor that is a safety net. At present it is Zero! All I am saying is that should be an absolute minimum. I would question, whether any Mayor worth their salt wouldn't get every Councillor on board. All I wanted is to have in legislation, that doesn't exist at the moment, some form of a safety net. Whether or not that safety net is valid - the Mayor may argue that it is too far out; the councillors may argue it should be more; to me it is a good little safety net that doesn't exist at the moment.

In answer to the CEO Directive: I reckon I know a fair chunk on the CEO's around the State (and most of them are pretty good operators), I would be very surprised if they didn't keep a list of the Directions that were given to them, if they had any concerns about them. All this does is free up the nonsensical arrangement where a Mayor and a CEO who work well together, should have to be part of what is nothing more than paternalistic behaviour from the State. I won't be part of that. So if either want to keep a list that is fine, but it is not for me to bully them to tell them to do so.

On the Local Laws, I take your point on board. My view on Local Laws is I add nothing to the process by having to sign off on it. Quite frankly I don't want to hold it up. I take on board you point if you think there is some benefit in advertising it via those traditional means. I don't ever remember getting too much feedback from the Community when making Local Laws and I thought it was a way that I could free you up some money. But if that is something you want to do, I would imagine Council could easily do that via choice, or if you think it is something that should be in legislation I am happy to get bowled over, if that is what you want to do. Again, it was me trying to empower Local Government!

The final one is one near and dear to my heart. And that is about conflict of interest and material personal interest. I will not take a backward step in the fact, that I think good people have not put up their hand to run, because they have been treated like crooks. I will not resolve from that. What the changes to the Act do (in fact exactly what you are talking about), is make sure that where there are some bad apples, we can come down on them at a hundred mile an hour. But where people are going about their normal business for ordinary business matters, I don't want them to have to go through the absolute ringer. So let me give some examples.

1. Someone at the moment - if another Councillor may have a conflict of interest and you don't declare it, you are in breach. That is Nanny State Nonsensical Nonsense! People should be able to decide their own.
2. Your adult child owns shares in a company and you have no idea; turns out that you vote on something; you are in serious strife, because you didn't declare an interest of your adult child who lives in London. That is nonsense!

But what the Act does do, is if you use information that you have gleaned as a Councillor and you are being dodgy, for the first time there are real repercussions. There is possible jail time and there are fines up to $110,000.00. So rather than get bogged down, I have seen Councillors leave a room because their kids go to
a school, or because they were a Girl Guide and they had a nostalgic interest. That is absolute nonsense. I would rather see us come down at a hundred mile an hour on the couple of rogues, than make all the rest of you bogged down in paternalistic nonsense.

Session Chair

Ladies and Gentlemen time is away from us. Please thank the Minister, Steve and Tim. All of the matters raised today, will no doubt be considered by the Minister and certainly by us in further submissions, as we head toward the debate on the Bill in November.
Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal update
Deputy President Adrian Bloomfield
Chairperson
Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal

Introduction

This morning to provide an update on the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal, we are again pleased to have with us the Tribunal's Chair Person, Adrian Bloomfield. Adrian is the Deputy President of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and he served as Inaugural Chair of the Former Local Government Remuneration Tribunal. He is part way through a four year term as Chair of the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal and he appears to be holding up reasonably well.

Please welcome back to the LGAQ Annual Conference, Adrian Bloomfield!

Deputy President Adrian Bloomfield
Chairperson
Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal

Thank you David for your warm words of welcome and thanks to the LGAQ for the invitation to come and speak to you again! At the outset, might I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we gather and their Elders past and present.

I must admit to being quite surprised yesterday when your outgoing President, Paul Bell, asked the new Councillors and Mayors to stand so that they could be recognised. I was expecting that there would be a fairly high turnover based upon the reports which I had received. But I wasn't expecting that, about 60% of the audience would be people who are fresh to Local Government, in terms of election earlier this year.

As a result of that, I went back to work yesterday in the middle of the day and changed the presentation which I am going to give, in order that I might provide some background to the activities of the Tribunal, to let people who are new to the area, know a little bit about what we do and what our role is.

The Tribunal was established in 2007, as a Remuneration Tribunal only. In 2010 its role was changed a little bit, to add the Discipline function. So our responsibilities include:

- Establishing categories of Councils;
- Assigning Councils to categories;
- Setting the remunerations levels for Councillors, Mayors and Deputy Mayors.
- We also have to consider any applications which might come through for exceptional circumstances arguments. In a sense that someone says 'we have got a particular issue which we think deserves additional remuneration for either: the Mayor, a Councillor or someone like that. We consider those on a case by case basis, under section 43 of the Local Government Operations Regulation;
- Since 2010 we have been hearing and deciding the most serious complaints of misconduct (which is an obligation put on us by Section 1768 of the Act).

2011 was our last report, issued late November, early December. We decided to maintain the number of categories we had previously determined, as eleven. We, in response to submission which have been made
to us very strongly over the previous three or so years and in response to the unanimous Resolution passed down the Gold Coast last year, decided to abandon the previous concept, which we had of setting remuneration ranges for each category of Councillor. Instead we set a single rate for each level of Councillor.

I might just explain what that means to those who are fresh to the arena. That is a table which appears at the back of our 2011 Report (reference to slide) and highlights the remuneration levels which we had established previously.

- The red bar identifies the highest rate which we said could be paid in a particular category.
- The yellow bar represents the minimum rate that we said could be paid in a Category.
- The purple bar represents the lowest rate that was adopted by any Council's in that category.
- The blue bar represents the highest rate that was adopted by any of the Council's in that category.
- The green bar represents the average that was decided when we look at all the Councils in each category.

At the bottom of each table you will see the category number and the number of Councils assigned to that category. Totalling 72 in all!

Similar thing for Deputy Mayor's, similar thing for Mayor's which I won't particularly highlight.

Our task last year in amalgamating the practices which we had previously adopted, to try to come up with a single rate, was to have a look at the rates which we had previously decided. Over on the left hand side of each of the categories, you will see a white and yellow bar, the white represents the lowest amount that we had previously determined and the yellow represented the maximum amount that we said could be paid in any range. Next to that is the purple and blue. You will see the rates that were voted by Council's - purple being the lowest that they had adopted and the blue on top of that representing the highest that the Council's had decided to adopt.

In moving to a fixed rate, we had to find a happy medium between the two. We also had a look at the issue of affordability and we came up with the rates. Those rates reflect an approximate 2.5% increase in total remuneration, to the whole of the Local Government sector. Going back in 2007, when we set up the first remuneration structure, the total wages bill across the Local Government sector was 32.1 million dollars. So we are not talking about small numbers, when we put in all of the Council's in the State.

Last year as a result of the changes which we made, moving to the single rate, the total wages bill had moved up to 35.7 million dollars. So, we are talking big numbers in terms of the total remuneration and we as appointed persons to set rates which match community expectations as well as reward the efforts and the like of Councillors, have to come up with what we think is an appropriate figure.

By way of history again, we have been, in recent years, fairly circumspect about the level of increase that we have granted to people. The original rates were set, operative from the 1st January 2008. At that same time, we set a ten percent loading, which would apply to Councillors going through amalgamation. That ten percent loading was to be phased out over four years, with the first period of loading to operate for eighteen months, the next period for twelve, the next period for twelve, then the last one was only nine months and that reduced over the life of the Council's term.

In 2009 as a result of the Global Financial Crisis, Governments Federal and State, decided to implement a wages freeze. We matched those considerations by the Federal and State Government and also put a wages
freeze in the Local Government arena - which meant in fact that, people in amalgamated Council's suffered a reduction in their total remuneration during the course of 2009, 2010, 3.1% - 2011, 2.5% and last year as I said a moment ago, 2.5% built into the set rate which we put together.

Now, the previous ranges which we had set up, allowed Councils to decide (this is the Mayor rate, which wasn't the one I was looking for. Mainly the Councillor rate), the minimum and maximum rates, allowed Council's to have look at the nature of the workloads undertaken by Councillor's within their area and it was possible to set different rates for people with different responsibilities. So, as you have heard me say before (for those who have been here before would have heard me say), Councils like the Gold Coast and Logan in particular, paid the Committee Chair Persons the highest rate, paid normal Councillors the lowest rate that we had established. Other Councils adopted practices in between, as represented in that table.

Because we have moved to a single rate, it is now no longer possible for Councils to "reward" Councillors in a different way, depending on the responsibilities that they exercise. We have been invited on a number of occasions, in terms of the lobbying, to move to a single rate to establish specific rates for people who might Chair Committees, or Chair Portfolio's. To be very blunt with you, we are 'not' and I repeat 'not' prepared to do that. We undertook a survey about three years ago, to find out what the nature of the practices were, within Councils. In the seventy two Councils, I think there are 42 or 44 different practices.

Some Councillors have Portfolio's, some Councillors have a Committee of the whole, some break it up into half a dozen Committees! But I am aware of one Council (when we looked at it) that had twenty two separate committees between six Councillors. We are not prepared to pay, for example, two or three percent for every Councillor that Chairs a Committee, because really it is just quite ridiculous.

So any determination as to extra remuneration for Councillors who exercise different responsibility to their peers, will need to be looked at on a case by case examination. If you read the purple report from last year, at page 12, you will identify the types of areas where we have in the past looked at exceptional circumstances applications and we also post up on our website, areas where we consider (whether we approve or reject them), but areas where we consider Section 43 applications.

This year we will again be looking at the number of categories, as we do every year. We will also be reviewing the assignment of Councils to categories. Less likely to take effect this year, because we conducted a very major review last year and moved one Council up and two Council's down in terms of their category. Then, obviously we will be determining remuneration.

In terms of the determining of remuneration, we have invited public submissions. We have written to each of the Mayors and CEO's inviting submissions to be lodged. At the moment we have about thirty submissions that have been received. If anyone still wishes to put in a submission, either at the Council level, or at an individual level - if you did that relatively quickly, even though our closing date was technically the 5th October, we have never 'not' considered a late submission, provided it comes in before we start to put pen to paper and finalise our determination. So, if anyone is wanting to put in a submission, could I ask them to do that by the end of next week.

I will just go back, sorry. One of the influencing factors this year will be (in terms of our consideration), is that the Federal Remuneration Tribunal decided to increase the rates of Federal Politicians by 3% from the 1st July 2012. My understanding is that that has gone through without a whimper. In terms of the State Government, the State Government used to have legislation in place where, decisions of the Federal Tribunal automatically flowed to the State, MLA's, less $500.00.
But when Premier Bligh was trying to control the State Budgets, some regulations I understand, were enacted which gave the Government capacity to pass on the Federal increase, if it wished to. Pass on a lower amount if it wished to, but it required a decision, it wasn't automatic. I understand that the Newman Government has not done anything in respect of implementing the Federal Remuneration Tribunal's decision of 3%.

So that is one element we will be looking at. 3% Federally, that has been decided. But we have also got on the other side of it - our wages policy for example, in the State system, where the Government is currently making (as you will have read in the media), a range of different levels of offer to its own employees. 2.35% for the white collar workforce; 2.7% for ambulance officers, fire officer, teachers, those sorts of people! But the general aim of the government is not to increase wages by any more than 2.5% and to keep total wage related expenses, including the impact of new employees (CREEP) to 3% or less. That is another influencing factor to us as well.

We would be interested in hearing your views and what you think an appropriate level of increase might be. Whether it might be zero, 2.5%, 3%, whatever you might wish to propose.

Finally, can I just turn to the discipline aspect of it! We are responsible for hearing and deciding the most serious complaints of misconduct, which Councillors might engage in. The primary activity that we have been asked to consider relates to section 171(3), where there has been an allegation that the Councillor has released information that the Councillor knows (and these are the key words), or should reasonably know, is confidential to the Local Government.

We have expressed views in the 2010 report and we have repeated them last year - But, in our view 'reasonably know' does not relate solely to information that might have been discussed in closed sessions of Council. In 'Closed', I am talking about when there is an action under Section 72 of the regulations, but rather, Councillors should appreciate that any information that they come across in the course of performing their duties, which may be information that is confidential, needs be treated as such. It can't be broadcast around the constituency, simply because it wasn't discussed with Councillors in a 'closed session'.

This is perhaps a small 'w' warning, as to how we will treat the disclosure of information. The test will be on you, in a sense that, if you should reasonably know, or reasonably expect that the information is confidential, that is the way that we will be viewing it.

I am happy if there are questions at all.

Session Chair

Thank you very much Adrian. It is always terrific to have you here and your very logical way of explaining these things to us. It is very important, particularly given we have so many new Mayors and Councillors in our midst over these couple of days, that they have that opportunity. Are there one or two questions for the Deputy President?

Comment/Question:
Cr Bill Attwood, Mayor, Etheridge Shire Council
I was just looking more at the Councillors remuneration. I don't quite understand, what it is that Brisbane City Councillors do in category 9, that we don't do down in category 1. We all have businesses to run, we all have put in (I think) around about the same amount of time to Council and why there isn't a more equitable spread? I can understand you trying to stay to around $35 million, that is fine, a more equitable spread of remuneration.

Response:
Deputy President Adrian Bloomfield, Chairperson, Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal

The Tribunal is required to consider a number of factors in deciding remuneration. Part of which has to do with size, part of which has to do with responsibilities and we have also got to take into account the population service, the income of the Council and so on..... With great respect to Councils that are put in category 1, which I think Etheridge is, you have got a rate base - which is about 'yay big', you have got a number of electors per representative – 'yay big', (you go to the Gold Coast and the numbers go way up and there is a range in between).

So we have got to take all of those things into account. If we awarded the same sorts of rates that are paid at Brisbane, to the Etheridge Shire Council, the wages bill would exceed the rate base. I'm over emphasising it a bit, but probably 50% of your rate base would disappear in remuneration being paid to Councillors. So, we have got to adopt a pragmatic approach and as President Bell said yesterday, even with the rates that you are paid in a category 1 Council, you are still receiving more than some of the huge Councils which exist in New South Wales and Victoria.

Comment/Question
Cr Alan Gurney, Deputy Mayor, Carpentaria Shire

I love the way you use your hand signals, allow me to help you as well! Most South East Queensland Shires have a size area of this big (hand gesture), Etheridge for instance, has a size about that big (hand gesture) and Carpentaria has one this big (hand gesture), so does that help us get more money, or what?

Response:
Deputy President Adrian Bloomfield, Chairperson, Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal

Simple answer, it helps inform our decision making, but it is not the sole criteria we have to consider. We have got to consider the size and we have got to consider other factors as well. If you go back (and it is probably useful less than for people who are new), all of our reports are published on the Local Government website (look for Remuneration Tribunal). Go back to the 2007 Report, which is our first one and we highlight in there, one of the reasons why we have put different Councils into different categories. Some of the Councils (just looking at the map), Goondiwindi for example, really should be a lower category, because it is (hand signals), wide and there is a lot of travelling cross ways. We said that because of their footprint, they should go up a category. The same comments are made in respect to a number of others. So, it is one factor, but is not the sole factor we try to consider.
Session Chair

One more and we have to move on. Adrian I must say, I am very glad, it isn't a visual thing, because if we had to count kangaroos, you could do it yourself.

Comment/Question:
Cr Keith Douglas, Cloncurry Shire Council

I would just like to make more comment! When you have a mining operation going on in your Shire, you are also confronted with a whole lot more work, than what a normal shire without would.

We have got three or four mines. We truck all that ore and all that money down here so we can build tunnels for Brisbane as well. I think that you need to take that into your consideration too. The fact that we do a lot of work, to keep old Brisbane alive! We even fly the people in and out of here. They live down here on the coast, we fly them in and out and look after their men through the week and send them home to their wives on the week off. So, there are a lot of things you need to consider about the workload on all of us out in the bush.

Response:
Deputy President, Adrian Bloomfield, Chairperson, Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal

Can I just indicate to you.... I take issue with a couple things you have said. With respect, you do not fly them down, you do not fly them back, you do not send the stuff down. The people who work in your Shire do. The employers do! But the Council does not! If you can advance a case as to how the mining and other things which are in existence in your Shire, add to the workload of a Council and the Councillors, or some of them, we are prepared to consider it. If you go back in to history and have a look at why the Western Downs Shire Council has been re-categorised, they advanced such a case.

Session Chair

Thank you so much Adrian for your normal, good humour and the very expert way in which you have conveyed that really, quite often, technical information. Thank you!
State Opposition update

Mr Tim Mulherin MP  
Shadow Minister for State Development,  
Infrastructure, Planning and Racing,  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry,  
Local Government, Science, IT and Innovation

Introduction:
Session Chair

This morning to present the State Opposition Update, we have been joined by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Tim Mulherin MP. Tim is an old mate of many of us in Local Government. He was elected Deputy Opposition Leader and Deputy Leader of the Queensland Labor Party on the 25th March this year. He holds the Shadow Portfolio of Local Government, State Development, Infrastructure, Planning, Racing, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Science, IT and innovation.

Quite a broad Portfolio Tim! Tim has been the State Member for Mackay since July 1995. In the previous Government, he was Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economics. His previous Ministerial responsibilities include - Rural and Regional Queensland, Primary Industries and Fisheries. Tim is a third generation Mackay local and he is very proud and parochial, about his area around the Mackay region. Tim, welcome and thank you for being with us this morning!

Mr Tim Mulherin MP  
Shadow Minister for State Development,  
Infrastructure, Planning and Racing,  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry,  
Local Government, Science, IT and Innovation

Thanks Paul and I apologise to delegates for being late this morning, but there were two urgent, unscheduled meetings that involved the estimates process and a meeting with Madam Speaker.

It is great to have the opportunity to address you this morning and talk about how the Opposition sees the future of Local Government in Queensland. I am not going to gloss over the Labor Parties defeat at the election in March. The cold hard fact is that, our Parliamentary representation has been reduced to a team of seven. The message could not have been clearer. The seven of us who represent the party on the floor of the Queensland Parliament, know that we are very small in number, we are abundant in spirit and determination, we are a team in the true sense of the word.

As our task is to rebuild our Party, reaffirm our values and principals, and reconnect with voters who left us in the pass. I am of course aware, that the relationship with the LGAQ has been somewhat strained in the past and that is something that we are very conscious of and something that I and Annastacia Palaszczuk, sincerely want to address and rebuild that relationship.

Since the election in March, we have been focussing on getting out and about in Queensland. We have been to many regional centres, have met with some of the Local Government Mayor's. We have been to places like Cairns down to Townsville, Townsville down to Bowen. We have done the Rockhampton area. Gold Coast,
Ipswich and Logan are next on the agenda! I think Mt Isa in November, I am trying to reorganise the diary so I can drive out from Townsville, so I can catch up with Mayor's on the way through.

So our discussions are with people and groups, across the State, will help inform our policy development. Next year will be a period of developing policies. It will be one where we engage extensively around issues, bringing people together. Some of you may have been involved in the way that I approached agricultural reform, by bringing together various stake holders and finding a consensus on a number of complex issues.

Through these discussions, I am hopeful that we find new ways of improving service delivery and infrastructure delivery. We need all levels of Government to work together, to meet the challenges of providing infrastructure and services that meet the expectations of our community. That will be a major part of our work in developing policy. It needs to be based on a sensible and mature discussion, to find common ground and that practical way of doing business.

In service delivery, we could eliminate needless duplication and provide a better, more integrated service delivery model for customers, by developing a ‘Shared Services Centre’. So, there is no reason why Council staff, could not be working side by side with Commonwealth and State and Public Servants.

For example - you could have Main Roads people processing Transport and Main Roads issues, such as licensing and so forth, with someone representing Medicare, along with Local Government. It is that sort of approach. I know that we will need to not only discuss it with the LGAQ, but also with Unions Representing the employees. I think we owe it to rate payers and tax payers, they are the same species of homo sapiens - they are not two different species. We need to look at how we can deliver that more efficiently. I think Q-Gap is a model that works, particularly in rural areas. But I think we can improve that.

I also want to look at how we further develop economic opportunities in regional areas. If you look at economic development in this state it is always (since European settlement), it has always been a west to east model. If you look at railway lines, they were constructed, west to east, before we developed the railway line from Brisbane to Cairns.

If you look at what will drive the Queensland economy in coming years - one of the key drivers will be the regional sector. Where are they located? You have got the northwest mineral province, you have got the Surat, Galilee and Bowen Basins - So there are opportunities in all those catchments. But what we need to do is have a legacy, beyond a point of extraction. That is, we need to ensure that we create industries of the future that will support the people of this State and this Nation, into the future beyond a life of a mining venture.

I think of Germany, where they mined black coal for three hundred years. They don't mine black coal in the Rhine Westfalen region of Germany, but what was the legacy of that industry? The legacy was innovation and technology. The Germans provide all that technology and innovation to the mining sector all around the world.

Likewise, how do we identify and value-add in the agricultural supply chain? From farm gate to the plate! Looking at those opportunities! Particularly in North Asia, there was a Commonwealth Government report into innovation and the thing that really stuck in my mind from the report was - 50% of the world's population live in the tropical world. The tropical world will have a third of the world's land mass, it will have 80% of the world's bio-diversity, demand for goods and services will be in the area of, health, education, food, urban design and service industry supporting industries that are in that tropical world. They value that economy at about $40 trillion US dollars by about I think, 2025.
So, countries with a strong research and development platform will be beneficiaries. I think where we are located, we are a stable democracy, Australia/Queensland is an advanced economy in a tropical world, so there is great opportunity. It is really about - how do we work with Local Government to seize those opportunities, to create the new enterprises that we may not think of today, but will certainly shape the opportunities for future generations.

We want to look at how we can (rather than just talking about lines on maps), how we can bring all that together in working with Local Government, to seize those economic opportunities!

We also want to have that feedback about, how we integrate our service delivery better. To look at - how do we fund infrastructure going forward? One size doesn't fit all! It can't be a one size fits all approach.

I was pleased during the estimate process with the Local Government Minister, the Honourable David Crisafulli, I raised with him about the flexibility of financial support programs, that Councils can access. For instance, some of them have a 50/50 component - 50% Local Government or 60/40. That sort of split contributions!

As we know, with a lot of the smaller Council's, they haven't got the financial capacity to meet a 50/50 or 60/40 split in a subsidy program. But the Minister assured me that, he would consider a 100% grant in some circumstances and it would be based around - that the project would deliver good value for money. I was encouraged to see that willingness of flexibility and I think that is what we have got to do going forward.

I also raised the issue, particularly in those rural areas (Boulia, Diamantina Shire, those places) where you have had a day labour workforce, working on flood repairs and the impact that that will have on the local economy, once that reconstruction work is completed. Whilst he was sympathetic to the issue, he had no idea of what could be done to keep those people in those areas. So that is a real concern! Particularly, if the worker has a young family - it could impact on the number of school teachers at a school, it could go from a two teacher school to a one teacher school, those sorts of things. That is a real concern!

The other issue I know that is close to Councils heart is: NDRRA funding, where the Commonwealth Government want to get rid of that day labour provisions. I want to work with the Local Government Association and take that issue personally up with the Commonwealth Government, so that hopefully sanity will prevail. It might work in big Councils close to the coast, where you can use contractors, but it is very important to have the flexibility of being able to use your day labour, for the reconstruction efforts.

In conclusion, as I said at the beginning, Queensland Labor is at the beginning of our long journey back to Government. As part of that journey, we want to reconnect with you! We don't want to reconnect six months out from an election. I will be working over the next two and a half years, with the Local Government Association and Councils on how we can look at developing policies, which will improve Service Delivery Infrastructure, for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

Finally, Paul, I understand this is your last conference as LGAQ President - I would like to thank you for your contributions, both at a State and National level over many years. You have done a good job

Thanks very much!

Session Chair
Tim said any questions, he would certainly like to take those. As he said, the Labor Party is in a big rebuild stage, certainly looking at developing policies. It is the time to connect and connect well. We have one question here Tim.

Comment/Question:
Cr Alan Gurney, Deputy Mayor, Carpentaria Shire Council

Just a quick question! Obviously the State Government we have at the moment, has a fantastic connection with Local Government through the LGAQ and I just wondered, are you heading down that path now, where you make sure that your prospective people to be voted in, have connections to the LGAQ?

Response:
Mr Tim Mulherin MP

Of course! Last week, I was down at the headquarters of the Local Government Association, had a long conversation with Greg Hoffman and Paul Bell. I want to have a continual dialogue with the LGAQ. But importantly, I want to also go out and meet with Regional Mayors, go into the Etheridge Shire, work closely with Warren Devlin - in the past there's economic opportunities up there with some of the work we started, around water allocation through the ‘Northern Australia Beef Arrangements’ that I set in place with the Federal Government. So, I am one for consultation, working a lot better and improving that relationship. I acknowledged at the beginning, that the relationship with the previous Labor Government, and some of its Ministers and the LGAQ, was strained. I recognise that, so I can assure you that I will work to rebuild that trust with Local Government.

Comment/Question:
Cr Rick Britton, Mayor, Boulia Shire Council

Tim, I really appreciate your working with David Crisafulli on the issues that Boulia Shire had and also for those far regions (remote and rural areas) and also I would like to appreciate the work you had done with AgForce, in the rural industry at the time. Thank you!

Response:
Mr Tim Mulherin MP

Rick, thanks for those kind words. I look forward to continuing the association I have had with the rural Mayors over the years and also with the organisations that represent the economic and social fabric of those communities.

Session Chair

Tim, to keep everything square, so we don't have to declare and declare and declare! We do appreciate you being with us. We understand the intensity of what you are doing and the members are doing and understand
that this morning was one of those days, where a lot of things come to a point, that you all had to be around the table. Thank you for coming over and addressing the conference delegates.

Constitutional Recognition of Local Government

Hon Justice James Spigelman AC QC
Chairperson, Australian Broadcasting Corporation

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